Université de Montréal

Three Essays on Metamorphoses of Social Capital and Associational Culture in Eastern Europe

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Résumé

Ce triptyque d'essais présente le caractère versatile et évasif du concept moderne de capital social à plusieurs niveaux – global, national et régional, ainsi que dans le présent et dans le passé.

Le premier article conteste l'hypothèse prédominante selon laquelle il y a une cohabitation entre l'engagement civique et la démocratie. Malgré sa validité au niveau général, la relation n'est pas confirmée si les catégories hétérogènes sont désagrégées. Pour les pays post-communistes de l'Europe, la relation entre le type de régime et la tendance de s'associer ressemble à celle des démocraties latines consolidées si la participation dans les associations volontaires est choisie comme mesure de la vitalité du capital social. Par conséquent, la vie civique moins intense ne prédit pas de difficultés pour la démocratie.

Le deuxième article est une compilation originale de plus de 100 organisations classifiées selon les standards contemporains et une collection de présentations d'une douzaine d'organisations bulgares, les plus populaires depuis le XIXème siècle. Cette contribution importante à l'historiographie de la vie associative bulgare jusqu'à 1944 est le résultat d'un travail qui combine des entrevues avec des historiens et une recherche dans les archives. Le panoptique organisationnel sert de réfutation empirique de l'hypothèse qui attribue la faiblesse organisationnelle présente du poste-communisme à la pénurie de vie organisationnelle développée par le passé.

Les mérites du troisième article sont doubles. Au niveau empirique on démontre que l'organisation culturelle la plus importante en Bulgarie a apparu comme une institution nationaliste imitant les organisations similaires des autres pays Européens. Elle s'est développée graduellement par une adaptation des expériences étrangères aux conditions locales. La collection des références bulgares est unique et représente le produit d'un travail méticuleux sur les documents et les entrevues. Au niveau abstrait, on confirme l'applicabilité de la théorie du transfert de la politique publique à un cas historique existant avant la théorie elle-même. Finalement, l'analyse détaillée des précurseurs du cabinet de lecture bulgare représente une contribution à la sociologie politique de l'histoire de la lecture.

Mots clés: Europe de l'Est, poste-communisme, démocratie, société civile, engagement civique, organisations volontaires, troisième secteur, affiliation, transfert d'idées, apprentissage organisationnel.

Summary

A triptych of essays presents the versatility and the evasiveness of the trendy concept of social capital on several planes – global, national, and regional, as well as in the present and in the past.

The first article challenges the influential hypothesis that there is cohabitation between civic engagement and democracy. While valid at a general level, the relationship is not confirmed once heterogeneous categories are disaggregated. For the European post-Communist countries, the pattern of the relationship between the regime type and the propensity to associate closely resembles the one in Latin mature democracies, provided that membership in voluntary associations is chosen as a measurement of social capital. Less intensive civic life does not bode for predicaments in democracy.

The second article is an original compilation of more than 100 organizations classified according to contemporary standards and a collection of narratives about a dozen of the most popular organizations in Bulgaria since the 19th century. This invaluable contribution to the historiography of Bulgarian associational life until 1944 is the result of field work which combined personal interviews with historians of the organizations and archival research of original documents. The organizational panopticon serves as an empirical refutation of the hypothesis inferring that present organizational weakness of post-Communism is due to the lack of developed organizational life in the past.

The merits of the third article are twofold. On empirical level it is demonstrated that the most important cultural organization in Bulgaria emerged

as a nation-building institution modeled initially by imitating similar ones in other European countries and later by adapting foreign experiences to the local specific conditions. The collection of original Bulgarian references is unique and it is again a product of meticulous work with documents and personal interviews. On a more abstract level it confirms the applicability of the voluminous and unstructured theory on policy transfer to a historical case existing before the appearance of the theory itself. Last, but not least, the overview of the major European precursors of the Bulgarian reading club represents a modest tribute to the less known field of political sociology of history of reading.

Keywords: Eastern Europe, post-Communism, democracy, civil society, civic engagement, voluntary organizations, Third sector, membership, transfer of ideas, lesson-drawing.

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List of Abbreviations

BWU - Bulgarian Women's Union

EU - European Union

FH - Freedom House

FIP - Fédération internationale de philatelie

GDR - German Democratic Republic

ICNPO - International Classification of Non-Profit Organizations

IDEA - Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

ISIC - International Standard Industrial Classification

NACE - General Industrial Classification of Economic Activities

NTEE - National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities

SCU - Supreme Chitalishte Union in Bulgaria

UCB - Union of the Chitalishta in Bulgaria

UNOR - Union of the Non-commissioned Officers in Reserve

UOR - Union of the Officers in Reserve

WVS - World Values Survey

WW I - World War I

INTRODUCTION

The present dissertation was partly inspired by the ***opus magnum*** of the transitologist Guillermo O'Donnell. In 1960 Seymour Lipset came out with a plausible and attractive hypothesis - democracy is related to the level of income, or to put it simply, the richer are more democratic (Lipset 1960). This sounded appealing to policy-makers, mainly in the Third World, who hastily interpreted the message that by boosting the economy, the political system will naturally be embettered by itself. In 1973 O'Donnell warned of a premature jubilation (O'Donnell 1973). Using quantitative data and statistical techniques, he dared to prove that increasing national economic prosperity in non-democracies not only does not lead to opening of the political system, but even stabilizes autocratic regimes. The empirical evidence came from his native region of Latin America.

Similarly, in the 1980s neo-Tocquvilleans, blinded by the fallacy of division, deducted that democracy and social capital go hand in hand. Today, the experience of the post-Communist countries, members of EU, cast a doubt on this hypothesis. Having almost perfect scores as democracies, they continue to lack strong civil society. Weimer Germany where abundant associational life did not prevent the arrival of totalitarianism represents the opposite classical example. Few authors have the courage to acknowledge this paradox. Among them Encarnación brought forward the examples of Brazil with rich civil society, but unconsolidated democracy and Spain with mature democratic regime, but much less active civic life (Encarnación 2003). Roßteutscher also

warned that social capital might act as a stabilizer of authoritarian regimes (Roßteutscher 2010). Like O'Donnell, with my essays I will not only prove the hypothesis that democracy does not require a strong civil society, a thesis that has been already suggested, although not explicitly. However, I will go even further, and demonstrate that some mature democracies like the European Latin ones are very close to the European post-communist countries in terms of organizational strength of their civil societies which does not make them less democratic at all, provided that we observe strict quantitative criteria in a consistent manner. An important assumption to be taken into consideration is that, *ceteris paribus*, the notion of democracy does not include high concentration of social capital. But before presenting the structure and the methods of the dissertation, I deem it necessary to introduce the major theoretical sources on the notion of social capital.

The term "social capital" has only recently attracted much scholarly attention. When it was used for the first time, it was not the focal point of the works, where it appeared. Its conceptual origins and history have already been a subject of debate among political theorists (Farr 2004; Fine 2007).

The first known use of the term is by Hanifan to describe rural school community centers (Hanifan 1916; 1920). She employs the term "capital" in a figurative sense, referring not to real estate or cash, but rather to goodwill, fellowship, mutual sympathy and social intercourse among a group of individuals who make up the social unit of the rural community. The author

makes an analogy with the business organization that needs accumulation of capital first. Since the individual is socially helpless, if he is alone or even with his family, he needs a contact with his neighbors. This leads to accumulation of social capital that, in turn, will improve the living conditions of the whole community. Such accumulation may be realized by means of public entertainment, picnics, and other community gatherings. The more people participate, the larger will community social capital become, and the more dividends will this social investment bring.

Almost half a century later Jacobs explains how urban neighborhood networks, as city social capital for self-government, encouraged public safety: "If self-government in the place is to work, underlying any float of population must be a continuity of people who have forged neighborhood networks. These networks are a city's irreplaceable social capital. Whenever the capital is lost, from whatever cause, the income from it disappears, never to return until and unless new capital is slowly and chancily accumulated" (Jacobs 1961, 138).

Recently the notion of "social capital" became a fad to such an extent that the literature on the subject proliferated in a progressive way. This concept, initially used in sociology and later, in politics, nowadays is to be found in the fields of social and economic development, education, and medicine. Almost any endeavor to present a review of the literature in all these related but yet heterogeneous domains, cites at least one of the works of the following classic authors: Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1980a; 1980b; 1986), Coleman (Coleman 1987;

1988a; 1988b; 1990), and Putnam (Putnam 1993a; 1993b; 1995a; 1995b; 1996; 2000). The three authors have been recognized as seminal by the majority of the specialists till present (Halpern 2005; Field 2008; Cannone 2009).

Lewandowski classifies the three dominant strains in the contemporary social capital theory, respectively, as Marxist (class-based), rational (policy-oriented), and democratic (neo-Tocquevillean) (Lewandowski 2006). However, he suggests another, a Simmelean (after German sociologist Georg Simmel) perspective, which is not action-oriented, but aesthetics-motivated. According to it, if sociability (*Geselligkeit*) is inchoate social energy, which is neither individual, nor collective, then social capital is the harnessed form of that energy.

Most authors agree that there exist several forms of capital and that social capital is one kind of them. However, Bourdieu is the only author who asserts economic, cultural and social capital is convertible into one another. Yet, the first type of capital is at the roots of all and the second and the third kind can be derived from economic capital, following the principle of conservation of social energy (Bourdieu 1986). Thus, social capital cannot be completely reduced to economic capital, but it can never be completely independent either. In an earlier work Bourdieu mentions symbolic capital, and also distinguishes between collective and individualized capital (Bourdieu 1980a).

Subsequent research (Coleman 1988a; 1988b; Putnam 1993a; 1993b; Fukuyama 1995; Ostrom 1995) seems to achieve a general consensus on the forms of capital, primarily adhering to three - physical, human and social. Examples of the first two (since our attention will be focused on the third form) would be: land, buildings, and machines - for physical capital; and knowledge and skills - for human capital. According to Ostrom and Uphoff, those three basic forms are human-made capital, different from natural capital, and they "are created by spending time and effort in transformation and transaction activities in order to build tools or assets that increase income in the future" (Ostrom 2000; Uphoff 1999). Capital in general is formed when resources are withhold from present consumption and are used to augment future production possibilities. Coleman suggests another form - financial capital (Coleman 1988a).

Scholars do not agree uniformly on the definition of social capital. In earlier works it has been identified with resources - either an aggregate of resources linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships (Bourdieu 1980a), or resources for action, available to an actor (Coleman 1988a), or a set of resources inhering in the family relations and in the community social organization that are useful for the cognitive development of the young (Loury 1977; 1987; 1995), or an arrangement of human resources to improve flows of future income (Ostrom 1995).

Recently a large number of authors have predominantly associated social capital with norms. For Putnam features of social organizations (one of them being norms) improve the efficiency of society (Putnam 1993a; 1993b). For Fukuyama it is a set of values or norms of members of a group or an instantiated informal norm (Fukuyama 1999; 2000). Social capital enables norms to develop (Dasgupta 1999). Some consider social norms and effective sanctions (Coleman 1988a), while others - the specific norms as a form of social capital (Ostrom 1992; 2000).

Others have related social capital to networks. While for Putnam the network is a form of a social capital (Putnam 1993a), for Rose social capital is a stock of social networks (Rose 2000), and for Stiglitz social capital is a collection of networks, into which one is socialized or aspires to be socialized (Stiglitz 1999).

Halpern attributes three basic components to social capital (Halpern 2005). The first two were already mentioned – network and a cluster of norms, values, and expectancies shared by the members of a group. The third one is sanctions – positive or negative, respectively rewards or punishments that are used in order to maintain the network and the norms. Sanctions could be formal, with serious consequences and, most frequently, informal and mild, but nevertheless, quite effective. The latter could be direct or, most commonly, indirect and subtle in their expression.

Social capital is sometimes associated with trust. Putnam finds trust as one of the forms of social capital (Putnam 1993a), while Fukuyama considers social capital as a capability arising from prevalence of trust in a society (Fukuyama 1995). Encarnación regards trust as the chief empirical indicator of social capital (Encarnación 2003), while for Kunioka and Woller the most succinct definition of social capital is trust (Kunioka and Woller 1999).

Interpretations of social capital abound. Ostrom, as well as Stiglitz link social capital with "tacit knowledge, producing cohesion" (Ostrom 2000; Stiglitz 1999), Bourdieu - with recognition (Bourdieu 1980a), Coleman, Ostrom and Fukuyama with expectations (Coleman 1988a; Ostrom 2000; Fukuyama 1999). Uphoff defines it as social, psychological and cultural assets (Uphoff 1999). Inglehart stresses culture – a culture of trust and tolerance, where networks of voluntary associations emerge, thus providing contacts and information flows (Inglehart 1997).

The category of social capital could be understood in a more or less broad sense. Putnam interprets it most narrowly - only in horizontal relations (Putnam 1993a; 1993b; 2000), while Coleman treats it both from the social structure and action perspective, adding authority relations in hierarchical organizations (Coleman 1988a; 1988b). Dasgupta goes even further by suggesting that it is a social and political environment for norms and horizontal and vertical associations, thus encompassing and expanding the previous two views (Dasgupta 1999).

One important differentiation between the social capital strands is made by a number of scholars (Putnam 2000; Hooghe and Stolle 2003; Halpern 2005; Field 2008). They make a distinction between bonding and bridging social capital which by all evidence is an echo of Granovetter's strong and weak ties (Granovetter 1973). The first one is inward looking and strengthens homogenous groups, while the second one is outward looking and unites groups with diverse backgrounds and interests. Svendsen and Svendsen regard bonding and bridging social capital as two polarities (Svendsen and Svendsen 2004). The first one is defined as a negative externality leading to economic decline, while the second one – a positive externality contributing to economic growth. The former "superglues" society with its destructive exclusiveness, while the latter "lubricates" co-operative interactions and transcends group cleavages within civic life. Streich considers horizontal, or intra-group (analogous to bonding) social capital as a non-democratic type, because it strengthens ethnic, religious and political cleavages (Streich 2008). At the same time vertical or cross-group (analogous to bridging) social capital enhances democracy, since it reinforces a sense of collective identity. He suggests a third type – deliberative social capital, i.e. networks of trust and social norms generated formally or informally during the deliberative process within given civil society.

Social capital can be potential and actual (Bourdieu 1980a), shared (Ostrom 2000), recurring (Rose 2000; Ostrom 2000), inherited (Bourdieu

1980b), informal for Fukuyama (Fukuyama 1999; 2000) and both formal and informal for Rose (Rose 2000).

Regarding the purpose of social capital, there is a universal consensus that it facilitates action (Coleman 1988a), coordinated activities for mutual benefit (Putnam 1993a; b), cooperation (Fukuyama 1999; 2000) and "mutually beneficial cooperative behavior" (Uphoff 1999). Totally in unison with World Bank literature on development, Rose affirms that individuals use social capital to produce or allocate goods and services (Rose 2000), while Ostrom suggests that it improves the flow of their future income (Ostrom 1995).

A preponderant number of authors argue that social capital is a public good, while conventional capital is a private good (Putnam 1993a). Coleman defends this view with the existing possibility of its underinvestment or suboptimal investment, which would not happen if it were a private good (Coleman 1988a). Dasgupta and Fukuyama argue just the opposite - that social capital is a private good, although it is pervaded by externalities, which are characteristic of collective goods (Dasgupta 1999; Fukuyama 1999; 2000). According to them social capital is a product of private markets, because it is in the long-term interest of selfish individuals to produce it in order to reduce their transaction costs.

Although social capital is treated mostly as a phenomenon benign to society, a number of scholars duly warn about its possible "dark sides" (Field

2008; Albacete 2010). Fukuyama provides the examples of KKK and the Mafia both acting cooperatively and share norms, but they produce negative externalities for the society (Fukuyama 2000). Sharing norms does not inherently produce social capital, because the values might be the wrong ones. Ostrom admonishes that forms of social capital can be used by some social groups to achieve advantage over other groups or even to harm others, while benefiting from the harm, for example cartels, gangs (Ostrom 1990; 1995; 2000). In an article, dedicated to the social capital networks in Russia, Rose provides an illustrative example of "bad" social capital in an anti-modern society (Rose 2000). Margaret Levi terms it "unsocial capital" (Levi 1996). In his ***Bowling Alone***, Putnam revises his theory of social capital, admitting that social capital can be directed toward malevolent, antisocial purposes and negative manifestations (Putnam 2000).

Pérez-Díaz distinguishes between two types of social capital - of uncivil and civil kind (respectively, built upon solidarity of mechanical and organic type in Durkheimian terms), or social capital with different degrees of civility (Pérez-Díaz 2002). Exploring different periods of Spanish history, he demonstrates how these types may transform themselves one into the other. Then he allows for various patterns of association by introducing "soft forms of sociability" like occasional associations, peer groups, and family-centered networks (Pérez-Díaz 2002, 284-5). Spaniards seem more prone to participate in informal networks than in formal organizations, in other words, preferring

close types of social connectedness rather than larger organizations. Spanish social capital is deeply rooted in family networks and other networks of informal cooperation, characterized by its weak ties. These may involve ***pandillas*** (peer groups who gather regularly in public places), ***tertulias*** (conversational communities), ***movidas*** (groups that walk together from one bar to another), communities established around a local fiesta, network of friends, neighborhoods and associations of housing owners (Pérez-Díaz 2002, 272).

Coleman and Ostrom are probably the only authors who have extensively compared social capital with the other kinds of capital in order to distinguish the similarities and the differences. According to Coleman, like other forms of capital, social capital is productive; it is not completely fungible, but specific to certain activities; it facilitates certain actions and constrains others (Coleman 1988a). What differentiates social capital is that it is the most tangible form of capital and that it is embodied in the relations among persons (in the social structure, for example, human capital resides in the "nodes", while social capital resides in the "links"). According to Ostrom, the common feature for all sorts of capital is withholding the present in the name of a future consumption or production (Ostrom 2000). What makes social capital different is that it does not wear with use, but rather with disuse; it is not easy to see and measure; it is hard to construct through external interventions; governments can affect positively or negatively the level and type of social capital.

One of Fukuyama's contributions to the theory of social capital is his extensive review of its measurements. If Bourdieu hints that the best measurement of social capital is the time devoted to acquiring it (Bourdieu 1980b), Putnam implies that the number of groups and their membership is a good predictor of sociability (Putnam 1993a; 2000). Fukuyama underlines that Putnam's approach could be improved if one takes into account the concept "radius of trust" - the circle of people among whom cooperative norms are valid. He credits Harrison with its introduction in social science (Harrison 1985). Another kind of measurement is survey data on trust and values on a national (General Social Survey) and international (World Values Survey) scale. Fukuyama offers a third original solution - measuring the absence of social capital through traditional measures of social dysfunction - rates of crime, family breakdown, drug use, litigation, suicide, tax evasion (Fukuyama 1999). It is again Fukuyama who warns that distribution of social capital could be uneven, both on national and international level. If social capital is associated with value and therefore is regarded as a concept of economics, it can be measured by the changes in market valuations of a company before and after takeover offers, since social capital is one of the intangible assets (Fukuyama 2000). Recently participation in elite-challenging actions has been proposed as a more accurate measurement of social capital, or more precisely, its emancipative form (Welzel, Inglehart and Deutsch 2005). These authors argue that elite-challenging activity is linked with greater civic benefits, at both the individual and societal level, than is membership in voluntary associations.

After the theoretical presentation which does not claim for exhaustiveness, I find it necessary to outline the structure and the methodology. In addition, relevant methods are discussed in detail within in each article. The dissertation is a compilation of three essays. Each of them can be read independently of the others. Their common denominator is their subject – the notion of social capital and its best measurement – the organizational strength. The reason why organizational membership and numbers are the most robust measurements is explained in the first article – because they are the only quantitative characteristics that can be traced over time. No other indicator can boast of available historical data for a longer time period. Such a trilogy of essays possesses also internal logic and completeness. The first article compares the post-Communist region with other regions on a global level. The second one touches upon the overall organizational picture in a single post-Communist country – Bulgaria until 1944. The third one focuses on the most important civil society organization in the same country. Thus the analysis proceeds from the more general to the more specific. At the same time while the first article uses quantitative empirical data, the second and the third one utilize mainly historical and statistical narration. In all three of them the main method used is the comparison for similarities and differences – in the first article – among the regions in the world, in the second one – among organizations nationwide, and in the third one – among organizational inspirations for a single institution within the European continent. Finally, data was collected from meticulous research in archives and original statistical

publications, in addition to personal interviews with organizational historians and activists.

Another reason for having three different essays on the same topic stems from my profound conviction, based on experience that quantitative and qualitative methods cannot and should not be combined in one and the same research. The reason is straightforward – it lies in the assumptions or the axioms. Quantitative research requires simplifying reality and choosing few notions that are quantifiable. Qualitative research is richer, but at the same time vaguer and it cannot be defined in mathematical terms. *A priori* quantitative and qualitative researches are different. This does not imply that they are antithetical – one does not exclude the other. In fact, same conclusions or hypotheses can be confirmed by using them both in separate ways. But the categories and notions should be represented in different ways.

Before providing the exact citations of the publications, I would like to justify with data the *raison d'être* for the special interest in Bulgarian *chitalishte*. The data also maps the dynamics of this organization over the long haul. There exists no other voluntary organization in Bulgaria with similar data for such a long period. Figure 1 on page 16 indicates the number of *chitalishte*, showing two peaks, one in the mid-1930s and another, in the 1950s. Later, their numbers (controlled for the size of the population) remained more or less stable, until 1990 when they became erratic. Figure 2 (the ratio of members to the whole population) on page 16 basically follows the same pattern. The height

of membership occurred in the post-War II years, and declined after the demise of Communism. Figure 3 and 4 on page 16 measure the distribution of reading associations throughout the country. From Figure 3 on page 16 it is clear that until 1935 the expansion of *chitalishte* was very quick. Then, during Communism, the goal was to end up on average with one *chitalishte* per settlement. Figure 4 on page 16 confirms the observations about the expansion of membership in all Bulgarian settlements during the Communist period, demonstrating that it was a nationwide, and not an isolated phenomenon.

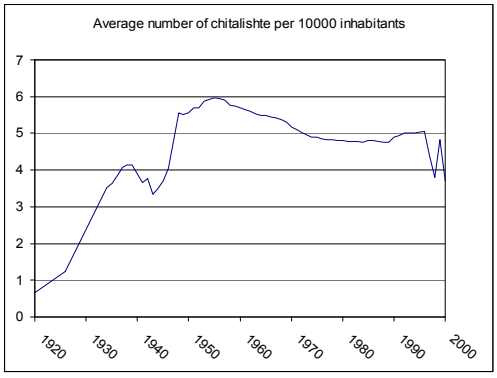

Figure 1

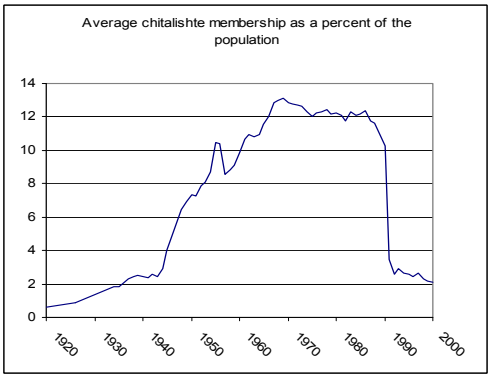

Figure 2

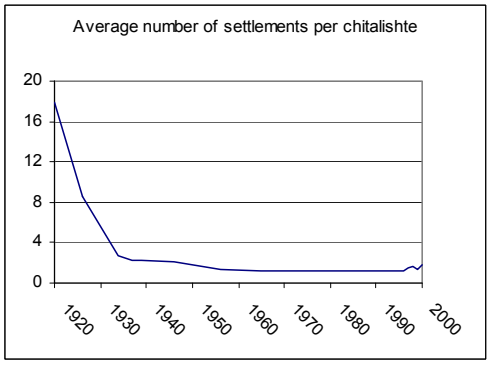

Figure 3

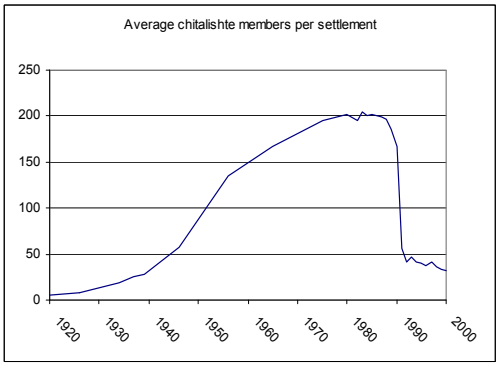

Figure 4

Sources: Bulgarian Statistical Yearbook 1910-1946; Kondarev, Sirakov and Cholov 1979.

Finally, I am providing detailed information about publications and communications related to the three dissertation chapters. The first chapter initially appeared as an article "Membership in Voluntary Organizations and Democratic Performance: European post-Communist Countries in Comparative Perspective" in *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* (published by Elsevier), volume 42, issue 1, March 2009, pages 1-21, available online at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2009.02.008

Versions of it were also presented as a poster "Comparing Apples without Juxtaposing Oranges: Linking Democratic Practices with Civic Engagement in European Post-Communist Countries" during session 6, Division 11-Comparative Politics, on Friday, September 04, 2009, between 10:15 AM and 12:00 PM and as a paper "Democratization, Civil Society, and Social Capital in the Former Communist World: Four Empirical Tests of a Sui Generis Relationship" during 44-14 panel "Civil Society, Citizenship and Participatory Democracy" on Friday, September 04, 2009, between 2:00 PM and 3:45 PM at the 105th *Annual Meeting and Exhibition of the American Political Science Association*, "Politics in Motion: Change and Complexity in the Contemporary Era", September 03-06, 2009, Hall C-Metro Toronto Convention Center and Alberta-Fairmont Royal York, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Another, completely revised version, was presented as a paper "Challenging Global Hypotheses and Stretching Established Categories: Why

Not Worry about Low Social Capital and Weak Civil Society in Post−Communist Europe" during session WC54, panel "Comparative Perspectives on Democracy", sponsored by Comparative Interdisciplinary Studies Program Chair, on Wednesday, February 17, 2010, between 1:45 PM and 3:30 PM at the 51st *Annual Convention of the International Studies Association*, "Theory vs. Policy? Connecting Scholars and Practitioners", February 17-20, 2010, Beauregard, Hilton New Orleans Riverside & Loews New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA.

The second chapter first appeared as an article "Associational Culture in pre-Communist Bulgaria: Considerations for Civil Society and Social Capital" in *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organisations* (published by Springer), volume 20, issue 4, December 2009, pages 424-447, available online at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11266-009-9093-0

A version of it was also presented as a paper "Social Capital and Democracy in Eastern Europe: Historical Perspective of Bulgarian Organizational Life" during session 10, panel 10-40 "Social Capital, Social Policy, and Gender in Contemporary Eastern Europe" on Saturday, November 22, 2008, between 3:45 PM and 5:45 PM at the 40th *National Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies*, "Revisiting the Gender Question: Scholarship, Exchange, Experience", November 20-23, 2008, Meeting Room 407, Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

The third chapter, entitled "Borrowing of Ideas about Institutions of Social Capital: European Genesis of the Bulgarian Chitalishte" is sent as a manuscript for publication.

A version of it was also presented as a paper "The Birth of a Civil Society Organization: West European and Balkan Origins of the Bulgarian Chitalishte" during session 1, panel 1-37 "Consciousness and Civil Society in Bulgaria and Romania" on Thursday, November 12, 2009, between 12:00 PM and 1:45 PM at the 41st *National Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies*, "Reading and Writing Lives", November 12-15, 2009, Tufts, Marriott Copley Place, Boston, Massachusetts, USA.

CHAPTER 1

MEMBERSHIP IN VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS AND DEMOCRATIC PERFORMANCE: EUROPEAN POST-COMMUNIST COUNTRIES IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

1.1. Introduction

Since Alexis de Tocqueville, political scientists have been linking successful democratic performance with rich associational life, the latter being either the cause or the consequence of the former. Thus, there is an expectation that vigorous civic engagement precedes, triggers, or follows democratization of an authoritarian political regime. Membership in and numbers of voluntary organizations have proven to be the best and the most extensively used empirical references for theoretical concepts such as "social capital" and "civil society".[1] Established democracies on both sides of the Atlantic have been the prototypes for these influential hypotheses. They have, however, been explored in a wide range of countries and across most regions of the world, with some analysts stressing the connection between democratic and associational life and others being more skeptical about the correlation.

Recently, this finding has been put into question by the cases of the post-Communist countries. The fall of the Berlin wall irreversibly swept out most of the remaining authoritarian regimes in Europe and gradually started to

[1] "Social capital" and "civil society", although similar, are not synonymous notions. Social capital is the propensity to associate in the name of a morally good, non-profit cause, while civil society is part of the public sphere, different from the state and the market. Since associational life is chosen very often as a measurement for both, it would be relevant to consider the findings for civil society valid for social capital as well. Social capital is in the center of works like Rose (Rose 2000) and Bartkowski (Bartkowski 2003). Civil society is a focus in researches like Nemes (Nemes 2001) and Petro (Petro 1995).

replace them with democratic institutions and practices in everyday political life. Democracies appeared (or re-appeared) in Eastern and Central Europe, and democratic elections were conducted in Russia. Yet, contrary to the expectations of many, post-Communist states manifested less associational activity compared to mature democracies and even to newly democratized non-Communist states. The findings from the post-Communist countries seem, then, to raise a red flag about the robustness of the hypothesis of the simultaneous occurrence of democracy and strong civic engagement and such findings have provoked a body of literature from a range of skeptics. Nonetheless, they too have continued the tradition of working within one regional bloc or simply noting the weakness of certain correlations. No one has thus far re-examined the hypothesis for all regions, in light of the findings coming from the post-Communist cases.

This article does so by looking at the average membership in voluntary organizations and the correlations between civil participation and democratic performance, on the one hand, and electoral participation, on the other hand. It revisits the original hypothesis and offers a more detailed analysis, by breaking down regional blocs. When this is done, the observed variations unequivocally suggest that, in terms of associationalism, post-Communist countries resemble closely subgroups of both the mature democracy group and the non-Communist non-authoritarian group. Some consolidated democracies have low participation in voluntary organizations. Post-Communist countries resemble them in this

respect, rather than falling far from their norms. This observation has theoretical implications, demonstrating that regimes committed to democracy do not necessarily and at all times manifest high voluntary activism. The Tocquevillian pattern is not universal.

1.2. The Challenge of the Post-Communist Paradox

On a general level, the relationship between associational life and democracy has been at the center of a heated debate in the scholarly literature for the last two decades. The polar extremes could be termed respectively "optimistic" and "skeptical", with some authors of the latter group explicitly doubting the accuracy of a quantitative approach.

According to the optimistic view, "membership in voluntary associations is strongly linked with stable democracy" (Inglehart 1997, 189). Larry Diamond states "the more active, resourceful civil society is, the more likely democracy will be to emerge and endure" and even that social capital plays a "leading role" in transitions to democracy (Diamond 1999, 260). The positive influence on democratic consolidation includes stimulating political participation and creating additional channels for representing interests. Trying to explain institutional success of regional government in Italy, Putnam finds that "membership in horizontally ordered groups should be positively associated with good government" (Putnam 1993, 175). According to him, since many of the formerly Communist societies had weak civic traditions, and

totalitarian regimes destroyed even that limited stock, their prospects for democratization are bleak. Leaving aside the question of causation, Curtis, Grabb, and Baer note that the level of voluntary association membership for 33 countries tends to be particularly high in countries that have continuous democratic experience, high economic development and religious pluralism (Curtis, Grabb, and Baer 2001). Paxton finds that relationships between social capital and democracy, tested quantitatively and cross-nationally, are reciprocal (Paxton 2002). Vibrant associational life contributes to the creation and maintenance of democracy, as well as the other way around, democracy can boost the stock of social capital.

However, skepticism about a positive link between associations and democracy was expressed almost half a century ago by Harry Eckstein who noted that "if a society has a vigorous associational life, but if the associations themselves are highly undemocratic, then, upon my theory, democracy should not be stable" (Eckstein 1966, 282). Skeptical researchers often provide case studies that refute the initial hypothesis. For instance, Berman demonstrates convincingly that despite the associational boom in Weimar Germany, "neo-Tocquevillean" predictions of a strong democracy were wrong and instead the country "succumbed to totalitarianism" (Berman 1997, 424). With the example of the anti-Masonic movement in 19th century America which led to political turbulence and distrust, Whittington suggests that social capital can well be a disruptive and antidemocratic force (Whittington 1998). Referring to what

some scholars in the 1960s termed “demosclerosis", Carothers argues that proliferation of interest groups in mature democracies could choke the proper functioning of representative institutions (Carothers 1999-2000). And, he provides examples of three consolidated democracies with relatively weak associational life - Japan (fewer feminist, environmental, and human rights organizations), France (very powerful state), and Spain. Drawing on the case of France, Mayer demonstrates that active membership might be rising, in spite of the decline of generalized trust (Mayer 2003). Thus reliance on the usual indicators will be misleading. For her part, Levi doubts that “membership in such groups as bird watching societies and soccer clubs leads to a high level of democratic politics” (Levi 1996, 46).

Problems with measurement also lead to scepticism. Marsh and Gvosdev doubt that the total strength and efficacy of civil society can be gauged, because during periods without turmoil some of it “may lay dormant when the critical mass necessary to actualize its potential is lacking” (Marsh and Gvosdev 2002, 4). Kopecký deplores the fact that organizational density cannot provide information about the actual involvement of members (Kopecký 2003). He also indicates the existence of other possible forms of civic engagement, such as periodic mobilization on single issues. Similarly, Pérez-Díaz reminds us of uncounted patterns of association in Spain – what he terms the soft forms of sociability – found in peer groups, and occasional associations (Pérez-Díaz 2002).

After 1989, the debate was joined by researchers focusing on the European post-Communist countries. These countries were making clear progress on the political regime dimension, yet the data about their civil and associational life showed meager levels, thereby contradicting the expectations of concurrent growth or correlation. Among authors who have tested the link between associational life and democracy in European post-Communist countries, the majority admits the presence of social capital in Eastern Europe, but they almost unanimously deplore its scarcity.[2] Kopecký concludes that "the literature on associational life in post-Communist Europe conveys a rather pessimistic picture" (Kopecký 2003, 5). According to Field there is little evidence in post-Communist countries that social networks and civic engagement are correlated with democratization (Field 2003). When analyzing the Polish case and calling it "a stalemate", Magner insists that Poland will remain a country of strong formal democracy, but weak associational life. He infers that "the strength or the weakness of civil society organizations has nothing to do with the state of democratic procedures" (Magner 2003, 174). Petrova and Tarrow suggest a more qualitative evaluation of the voluntary activity in post-Communist countries by looking at the potential and the actual

[2] Nevertheless, some authors warned about misinterpreting the number of civil society organizations in Eastern Europe. Merkel warns about the different legal regulations and statistical rules for counting, doubting if organizations can be indicative of the strength and influence of civil society (Merkel 2001). He provides the example of Poland with the most vital civil society in the 1980s, which later lost considerably its organizational strength.

magnitude of the participation, as well as the ties among non-state actors and institutions (Petrova and Tarrow 2007).

There are, of course, some authors who claim that democracy and associational life go hand in hand in post-Communist countries. They argue that the situation is similar to that of liberal democracies. The predominant position, however, is one that demonstrates that post-Communist scanty organizational life does not match its democratic performance. Since the difference between the two groups lies within the methodology, I will provide examples of both, including a brief reference to the respective choice of cases, time period, level of analysis and operationalization of democracy and associationalism.

Several studies have been inspired by Putnam's hypothesis on the positive link between socio-cultural factors and democratic efficiency at a regional level, and scholars have replicated it in the post-Communist world, with some confirming the relationship. Two illustrative examples come from Russia and Romania. For Marsh the units of analysis are the 89 political-administrative units of the Russian Federation during the period 1993-1996 (Marsh 2000). His Civic Community Index is modeled after Putnam's – a sum of the z-scores of preference voting, referenda turnout, newspaper publishing, and clubs and cultural associations. His Index of Democratization resembles

Tatu Vanhanen's one (Vanhanen 1997).[3] After obtaining a positive correlation coefficient he "confirms the hypothesis that higher levels of social capital associate with higher levels of democracy". Ultimately, the author concludes that more civic regions in Russia tend to be more democratic, while those that are missing attributes of a civic community have less chance to score high on the Index of Democratization.

Stan also confirms Putnam's hypothesis at a regional level in Romania – she compares four county councils over the 1996-1999 period, in the Transylvanian counties of Arad and Mures and the Wallachian and Moldovan counties of Arges and Galati (Stan 2003). According to the study, counties where citizens were more interested in politics had higher levels of civic engagement and would resort less to clientelism, while by contrast, counties where citizens were more disinterested in politics and more reluctant to get together in voluntary associations were also counties where local governments had difficulty in solving common problems.

More numerous, however, are authors who explicitly or implicitly contend that post-Communist countries couple democratic performance with low organizational density. Three examples follow. Using regression analysis,

[3] The Index of Democratization is based on two indicators. The first one – level of competition – is 100 reduced by the percentage of all votes, excluding the winner for presidential or parliamentary elections. The second one – extent of electoral participation -

Howard posits that organizational membership is negatively linked with previous Communist experience (Howard 2002; 2003). In his research civil society is operationalized as membership in voluntary organizations using the third wave (around 1995) of the World Values Survey, while democracy is measured by the scores of political rights and civil liberties assigned for each country by Freedom House. His 31 available cases include eight older democracies, 10 post-authoritarian countries and 13 post-Communist countries. Although he finds that on a general level the correlation between democracy and organizational belonging is significantly positive, he notes the combination of low organizational membership and high democratic performance of post-Communist countries in Europe: "Many countries with a prior communist experience score well on the Freedom House scores and are classified as 'Western', yet still have relatively low levels of organizational membership" (Howard 2003, 85). Nevertheless, he does not make the next step that is to deduce that the general hypothesis of concurrence of rich democratic and associational life is ultimately refuted by the cases of post-Communist countries.

Letki and Evans use a survey conducted in 11 post-Communist countries between 1993 and 1994 (Letki and Evans 2005). Assuming that social trust is one of the components of social capital, they construct an Index of

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measures the turnout during national elections expressed as percentage of the total population. Both indicators have equal weight; hence they are multiplied and then divided by 100.

Social Trust. Institutional performance is measured by Tatu Vanhanen's Index of Democracy. After performing regression analyses, the authors conclude that democratization in East Central Europe influenced negatively levels of trust in the region, while the latter was irrelevant for the success of the former. They continue further: "Thus despite the communist inheritance, levels of social trust in ECE in the mid-1990s were not particularly low and, moreover, they were higher in countries where the process of democratization was less advanced". A similar conclusion has been reached by Hutchison and Korosteleva (Hutchison and Korosteleva 2006). Noting that levels of political engagement in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus is lower than in their Western counterparts, the authors find surprisingly that Belarus has higher levels of participation and support for democracy than its counterparts, yet is arguably the least democratized country of the three.

Paldam and Svendsen, referring to WVS data, argue that the Communist states – like all other dictatorships - destroyed social capital and the latter is as low in as it is in the Latin American countries (Paldam and Svendsen 2001). While they do not address the problematic cohabitation of their low levels of social capital and rising democratic performance, they do make the important observation that "Western-Latin" countries are closer in social capital to the

"old-Communist" countries than to the "Western-North" ones, dominated by British-German cultures.[4]

Since the literature review provides sufficient grounds to doubt the universal applicability of the close correlation between democratic and associational life, I decided to explore further, by performing several independent tests. The next sections will present the experiments and their findings. I will begin with a test for the propensity to associate and then I will test the relation between that propensity and the type of the regime in two different ways.

1.3. Are European Post-Communist Countries the Only "Bad Performers" in Terms of Associational Life?

Assuming that the most convincing and available measure of associational life remains participation in voluntary organizations, I use data from the World Values Survey (WVS) in order to perform a comparative analysis of the world stock of social capital. WVS is chosen because it is the most comprehensive and wide-ranging survey of values ever undertaken. It

[4] Dowley and Silver obtain similar result by exploring the interplay among social capital, ethnicity and support for democracy in 20 post-Communist states by using Freedom House's and World Values Survey's rankings for 1990 and 1995 (Dowley and Silver 2002). Because none of the bivariate correlations is statistically significant, the authors conclude that social capital is not correlated with democratization in these post-Communist countries. van Oorschot, Arts, and Gelissen also confirm that the 10 post-Communist countries, now members of EU, display lower levels of social capital (van Oorschot et al. 2006).

does not contain data for every country in the world during the respective time period, but no other study or a combination of studies can offer a more complete coverage allowing for temporal and historical comparisons. The survey started as the European Values Study in 1981. It was repeated 10 years later, as the second WVS wave and covered countries from all over the world. Further waves followed at intervals of approximately 5 years, each time including more countries. Currently a fifth wave is under way. Because the first WVS wave consists of a small number of countries and they cannot be grouped for comparison, I started with the second wave. The WVS questionnaires, administered to a representative sample of interviewees in each country, consist of several hundred questions that in turn result in as many variables.[5] For each WVS wave I will present the procedures as well as the reasons for the classification of the respective countries. The latter may vary as the timing and the circumstances for each country changes.

I deliberately disregarded data on membership in political parties or groups and in trade unions. Parties have clearly political ambitions and my goal here is to explore the relationship between a variable with a political nature and another one with no political relevance. Trade unions in Communist countries were allowed and were not only political organizations but also membership in them had a mandatory character. The high levels of union membership

[5] For a more detailed description consult Inglehart, Basañez and Moreno (Inglehart, Basañez, and Moreno 1998) and the website: http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org

remained persistent in post-Communist countries – a fact well documented by Howard (Howard 2003).

Countries are assigned to one of the four categories: post-Communist countries, consolidated democracies, non-Communist non-authoritarian countries and non-democratic countries. Post-Communist are all those European countries which experienced Communist regimes in their past. Consolidated democracies are countries from all over the world that have always been rated as "free" by Freedom House and the chances of reverting to an authoritarian regime are considered practically zero. The only three exceptions are Greece, Portugal, and Spain, where processes of democratization took place in the 1970s. Nevertheless, after their successful European Union accession there was little doubt about their belonging to this category. Non-Communist non-authoritarian countries are countries that have gone through some kind of authoritarian rule, but not a Communist one. They are rated as "free" or "partly free" by FH, they often change categories, becoming even "not free" for some time. Typical for them is their constant state of instability, unconsolidated democratic experience and fairly good prospects of regime reversals. Non-democratic countries are the ones rated as "non-free". Post-Communist countries that are not free also fall into this category, as is the case with Belarus, because the goal of the current analysis is to compare cases where some systemic changes have taken place. To summarize, the annual freedom ratings are matched with the respective year of the WVS survey, something that

was not always been strictly observed in earlier research. Countries considered as consolidated democracies never alternate within the three-step classification of freedom, while post-Communist countries and non-Communist non-authoritarian countries may appear for one or more WVS waves in another category. No country, with the exception of Yugoslavia, changes the group or the subgroup.

Three different scenarios are constructed and applied. The first one presents the cases during each of the three WVS waves. The second one gathers all the cases during the three waves together (140 cases), treating each data point as a separate case. The third one considers only the cases that appear in all WVS waves (15 in total) and there are no non-democratic countries in this test. Although the last one is the most limited it has the advantage of presenting cases of the same countries over time.

We start by looking at the average membership per person for each group of countries. The results from the first scenario are illustrated in Figure 5 on page 35. One can observe a persistent pattern. The values are highest for consolidated democracies, 1.07, 1.91 and 1.28 respectively for the second, third and fourth WVS waves. Also, they are always above the average of the total. Post-Communist countries during all waves are the lowest, with respectively 0.38, 0.67 and 0.52. Non-Communist non-authoritarian countries appear between consolidated democracies and post-Communist countries, but closer to

the former, at: 0.67, 1.52 and 1.20. Even non-democratic countries (a group appearing in the third and fourth WVS waves) have values (0.87 and 0.86) higher than those of post-Communist countries.

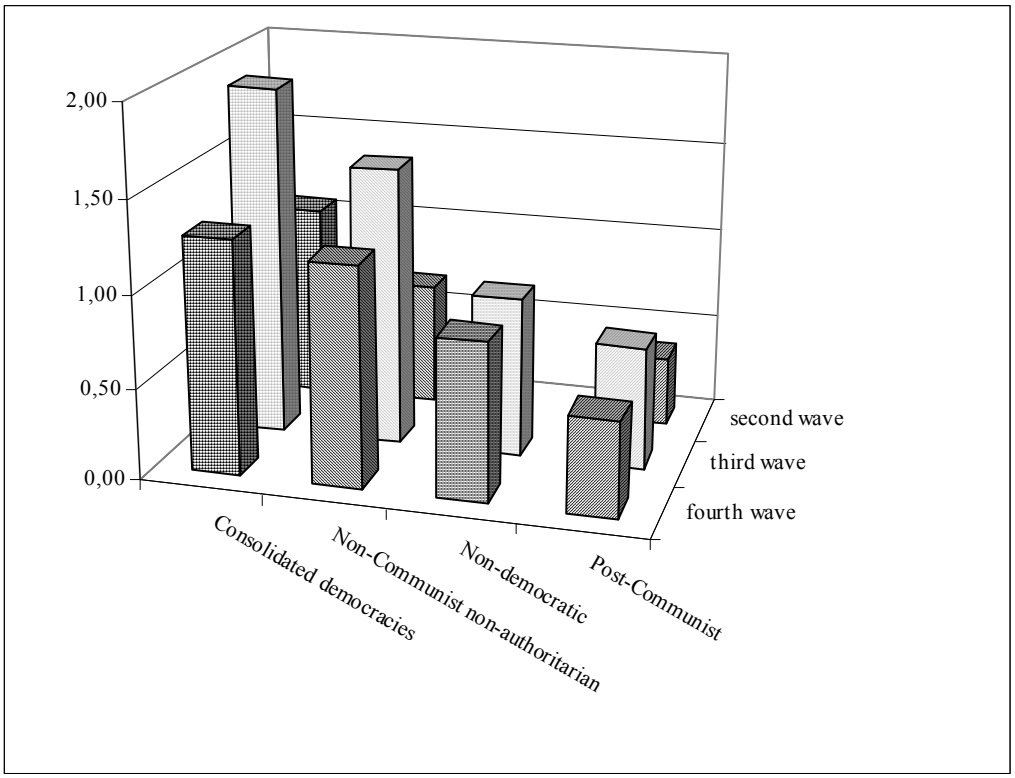

Figure 5. Average organizational membership for the four groups of countries – first scenario

The order is the same in the second scenario (Table I; first column on page 36): consolidated democracies have the highest values and above the average, post-Communist countries – the lowest. Non-Communist non-authoritarian countries are closer to the former, while non-democratic countries - closer to the latter.

The third scenario (Table I; second, third, and fourth columns on page 36) reiterates the same story, although without the group of non-democratic countries. During the three consecutive waves post-Communist countries are last and consolidated democracies are first with non-Communist non-authoritarian countries found in the middle, except for the third wave where their level of associational life is actually higher than the one in consolidated democracies.

Table I. Average organizational membership for the four groups of countries – second and third scenario

GROUP OF COUNTRIES	140 cases-all waves	15 cases-2nd wave	15 cases-3rd wave	15 cases-4th wave
All	1.04	0.76	1.33	0.93
Consolidated democracies	1.33	1.16	1.58	1.43
Non-Communist non-authoritarian countries	1.26	0.72	1.92	0.91
Non-democratic countries	0.85	-	-	-
Post-Communist countries	0.56	0.32	0.57	0.35

This first test leads, then, to an important observation: the ranking of the non-democratic countries above that of the post-Communist cases casts a first doubt on the hypothesis that democracy co-habits with vigorous civil society. A second observation relates to the consistently higher ranking of non-Communist non-authoritarian countries. It is not immediately obvious why those countries' move toward democratic institutions should occur in a context

of high rates of associational life while that of the move from Communism to democracy does not. Both these observations cry out for further examination, and one step in that direction is to look more closely at these standard classifications. A way to do so is to look within the groups themselves.

A second test involves, therefore, the standard deviations of the groups. Standard deviation for each group speaks of its homogeneity or heterogeneity. It is the average difference between each value and the mean. In other words, the lower the value of the standard deviation, the more homogenous the group of countries. Homogeneity strongly indicates that the group could not be further divisible. Where heterogeneity exists, one might think it wise to break the group into subgroups that would be similar. Examination of the standard deviations (Table II on page 37) reveals that consolidated

Table II. Standard deviation of organizational membership – first, second and third scenario

GROUP OF COUNTRIES	2nd wave	3rd wave	4th wave	140 cases-all waves	15 cases-2nd wave	15 cases-3rd wave	15 cases-4th wave
All	0.51	1.12	0.75	0.72	0.50	0.87	0.83
Consolidated democracies	0.53	0.63	0.78	0.72	0.43	0.90	1.07
Non-Communist non-authoritarian countries	0.35	0.67	0.83	0.75	0.42	0.68	0.35
Non-democratic countries	-	1.00	0.69	0.76	-	-	-
Post-Communist countries	0.16	0.38	0.36	0.35	0.08	0.35	0.26

democracies and non-Communist non-authoritarian countries have the highest standard deviations in all three waves and for all three scenarios, without exception. Such results mean that they are very heterogeneous in nature and a possible further breakdown within each group would be a logical next step. Post-Communist countries, on the contrary, exhibit the smallest standard deviations, making them a very homogeneous grouping (Non-democratic countries cannot be broken down due to their small number in the sample).

Acting on these findings, a number of possible breakdowns can be explored. Culture is one reasonable factor of difference. Some authors have observed that Latin European countries, like Spain (Torcal and Montero 1999) and France (Mayer 2003), for example, generally have low social capital compared with other developed countries. Following this lead, consolidated democracies and non-Communist non-authoritarian countries can be divided into Latin and non-Latin according to their official languages. Political situation is also sometimes mentioned as a factor affecting social forms. Consolidated democracies are also divided into European and non-European ones according to their location. Historical experience is captured by geographical location. Post-Communist cases are grouped as EU candidates and non-EU candidates, according to their status regarding the institution at the time of the interviews.

This reflects not only their preparedness to become members, but also the respective society's move towards European standards[6].

Two such controls on the three main categories alter the picture (Table III on page 39). Latin consolidated democracies manifest lower average

Table III. Average organizational membership after the breakdown of the groups of countries – first and second scenario

SUBGROUPS OF COUNTRIES	Latin	Non-Latin
Consolidated democracies, 2nd wave	0.48	1.24
Consolidated democracies, 4th wave	0.50	1.49
Consolidated democracies, 140 cases	0.56	1.51
Non-Communist non-authoritarian, 2nd wave	0.57	-
Non-Communist non-authoritarian, 3rd wave	1.65	1.33
Non-Communist non-authoritarian, 4th wave	0.90	1.33
Non-Communist non-authoritarian, 140 cases	1.23	1.29
	European	**Non-European**
Consolidated democracies, 3rd wave	1.75	2.15
Consolidated democracies, 4th wave	1.18	1.79
Consolidated democracies, 140 cases	1.22	1.75
	EU candidates	**Non-EU candidates**
Post-Communist, 3rd wave	0.63	0.71
Post-Communist, 4th wave	0.46	0.60
Post-Communist, 140 cases	0.54	0.57

membership per person than the non-Latin ones. European consolidated democracies display lower values than the non-European ones. Similarly, in the

[6] Romania and Moldova are the only post-Communist states that can be considered Latin. The second WVS wave provides no data for Moldova, since it has not declared

group of non-Communist non-authoritarian countries, the Latin ones perform worse than the non-Latin ones. Within the group of post-Communist countries, candidates for the membership in the European Union possess less average membership per person in voluntary organizations than non-candidates. A final observation discloses that post-Communist cases are closer to the Latin non-Communist non-authoritarian countries and even closer to the Latin consolidated democracies.

Looking at the standard deviations of the sub-groups (Table IV on page 41) leads to the conclusion that Latin consolidated democracies, Latin non-Communist non-authoritarian countries and post-Communist countries - EU candidates not only possess less organizational membership, but they are much more homogenous than the respective non-Latin and non-candidate ones.

Briefly, the answer to the question of the current section is that post-Communist countries resemble very much the Latin countries worldwide; moreover, they are particularly close to the Latin European ones. In that way they are not the only free countries with low voluntary organizational membership. This inference leads to serious doubts about the concurrence of democratic performance and associational life, which will be put to test in the following section.

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independence at that time. For the other waves two countries cannot form a subgroup that can be tested against the other Post-Communist countries.

Table IV. Standard deviation of organizational membership after the breakdown of the groups of countries - first and second scenario

SUBGROUPS OF COUNTRIES	Latin	Non-Latin
Consolidated democracies, 2nd wave	0.12	0.47
Consolidated democracies, 4th wave	0.15	0.74
Consolidated democracies, 140 cases	0.26	0.67
Non-Communist non-authoritarian, 2nd wave	0.18	-
Non-Communist non-authoritarian, 3rd wave	0.63	0.74
Non-Communist non-authoritarian, 4th wave	0.30	0.97
Non-Communist non-authoritarian, 140 cases	0.67	0.84
	European	**Non-European**
Consolidated democracies, 3rd wave	0.29	0.96
Consolidated democracies, 4th wave	0.71	1.10
Consolidated democracies, 140 cases	0.62	0.93
	EU candidates	**Non-EU candidates**
Post-Communist, 3rd wave	0.27	0.49
Post-Communist, 4th wave	0.29	0.45
Post-Communist, 140 cases	0.28	0.41

1.4. Do Democracy and Civil Society Always Go Hand in Hand? Correlations between the Index of Associationalism and the Index of Freedom

In the next experiment the coefficients of correlation between the level of democratic performance, as measured by the index of Freedom House, and the index of associationalism, as measured by the number of voluntary organizations per person (World Values Survey), in the respective countries are compared. A total of 19 coefficients were analyzed. If the hypothesis about the simultaneous presence of rich democratic and associational life holds true, all

correlation coefficients should be positive – democracies generate true civil societies while non-democracies do not. Unfortunately, this is not the case when we look at the reported results (Table V on page 42). Only consolidated democracies demonstrate a persistent pattern of positive values at all times. Post-Communist countries' values are always negative, except for the first scenario, second wave. Despite being free or partly free they do not perform well in civic participation. The high values during the 1990s can be explained by simultaneous low performance on democracy and associationalism. Oddly enough, non-democratic countries raise another flag against the mainstream hypothesis. Their expressed negative values can be interpreted as concomitance between low democracy and richer associational life. The same evidence is found in the group of the non-Communist non-authoritarian countries, except for the first scenario, third wave.

Table V. Correlation coefficients between WVS and FH values - first and second scenario

GROUP OF COUNTRIES	2nd wave	3rd wave	4th wave	140 cases
All	0.39	0.10	0.09	0.16
Consolidated democracies	0.32	0.75	0.52	0.44
Non-Communist, non-authoritarian countries	-0.23	0.31	-0.21	-0.08
Non-democratic countries	-	-0.67	-0.22	-0.41
Post-Communist countries	0.64	-0.18	-0.02	-0.06

Yet, at a global level, the hypothesis is confirmed by the positive correlation. Such findings call for an analysis at a less aggregate level, i.e. the breakdown of the groups of consolidated democracies and non-Communist

non-authoritarian countries into Latin and non-Latin ones by analogy with the first experiment. The coefficients for the Latin ones are at all times negative, while the non-Latin ones' – positive, except for the non-Communist non-authoritarian countries during the first scenario, fourth wave (Table VI on page 43).

Table VI. Correlation coefficients between WVS and FH values after the breakdown of the groups of countries - first and second scenario

SUBGROUPS OF COUNTRIES	**Latin**	**Non-Latin**
Consolidated democracies, 2nd wave	-0.65	0.22
Consolidated democracies, 4th wave	-0.58	0.54
Consolidated democracies, 140 cases	-0.49	0.42
Non-Communist non-authoritarian, 2nd wave	-0.15	-
Non-Communist non-authoritarian, 3rd wave	-0.23	0.83
Non-Communist non-authoritarian, 4th wave	-0.77	-0.11
Non-Communist non-authoritarian, 140 cases	-0.30	0.02
	European	**Non-European**
Consolidated democracies, 3rd wave	-0.65	0.22
Consolidated democracies, 4th wave	-0.58	0.54
Consolidated democracies, 140 cases	-0.49	0.42
	EU candidates	**Non-EU candidates**
Post-Communist, 3rd wave	0.42	-0.47
Post-Communist, 4th wave	0.40	0.41
Post-Communist, 140 cases	0.33	-0.14

Such finding definitely demonstrates that the hypothesis is not universally valid even within the group of consolidated democracies and the free and partly free non-consolidated democratic regimes. To put it another way, the final conclusion is that democracy and civil society are happily

married only on a global level and within the non-Latin consolidated democratic regimes; for the rest of the groups, which comprise the majority of the countries in the world, the positive correlation simply does not exist. This statement leads to the next logical question: even when democracy breeds civil society, is civicness necessarily linked to politics at all?

1.5. Is the Civic Volunteer Always a Political Activist? Correlations between the Index of Associationalism and the Index of Electoral Participation

Electoral participation speaks eloquently to the quality of democracy. The last experiment involves measuring the co-occurrence of associational vitality and voting turnout in the European post-Communist countries, as well as in other regions in the world. Henry Milner, in his 2002 book on civic literacy, was the first one to perform a similar experiment with 13 consolidated democracies in 1990 (Milner 2002). He found a correlation close to zero. Here, the relationship is tested by analyzing the correlation coefficients between two indices. The first one is represented by the average membership per person in the respective country compiled from the last three waves of the World Values Survey. Turnout data is taken from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), a Stockholm-based international non-governmental organization. Their turnout result differs from the one officially reported by the respective government. While IDEA's is computed as a ratio

between those who actually voted and the voting age population, the second one is a ratio between voters who cast their ballots and the ones who are registered on the electoral list. Evidently, the discrepancy might arise in cases when the list is not accurately updated and it may contain omissions or non-existent voters. Therefore, the IDEA turnout rate is considered more accurate[7]. The sample of countries was determined by the availability of data in the WVS, because IDEA has a more comprehensive list of cases. In addition, only parliamentary elections were taken into account, because not all countries elect a president.

Table VII on page 46 presents a summary of the correlation coefficients that provides enough material for deductions. At a general level, it can be confirmed that the correlation is almost insignificant and even negative. Consolidated democracies also display close to zero and negative values. Post-Communist countries astonishingly demonstrate at all times positive correlation and quite high values. It comes as no surprise that non-Communist non-authoritarian countries exhibit high negative values.

[7] Actually, as part of the control procedures, official turnout was used as well and similar results were obtained.

Table VII. Correlation coefficients between WVS and IDEA values – first and third scenario

GROUP OF COUNTRIES	2nd wave	3rd wave	4th wave	15 cases 2d wave	15 cases 3rd wave	15 cases 4th wave
All	-0.08	-0.05	0.08	-0.27	-0.23	-0.22
Consolidated democracies	-0.12	0.06	-0.18	-0.52	-0.10	-0.40
Non-Communist non-authoritarian countries	-0.27	-0.02	-0.34	-0.12	-0.89	-0.53
Non-democratic countries	-	0.71	0.62	-	-	-
Post-Communist countries	0.58	0.23	0.79	0.41	0.88	0.56

Three inferences come to the mind. Firstly, post-Communist countries either have high turnout and high voluntary membership, or just the opposite – low turnout and fewer memberships. From previous findings it looks like the second inference is more plausible. Secondly, high organizational activity in non-Communist non-authoritarian countries is coupled with low electoral participation, hence, meagre political interest. Thirdly, and most importantly, the results from the group of consolidated democracies indicate that high electoral participation and civic engagement are not *sine qua non* conditions for a democracy to thrive.

1.6. Conclusion

Quite enthusiastic about their future at the end of last century, nowadays citizens of post-Communist countries display more apathy. Obviously, then, this group of countries shows that democratic conditions do not always co-exist with vigorous political activism and voluntary association. Low membership rates and astonishing passivity within the countries of post-Communist Europe

should be understood as something which has its own internal logic and explanation. The origins lie in the nature of the societal transformations in the region. The dimension of these transformations could be compared with critical historical moments. For instance, one would not expect exceptional organizational expansion during the time of the American Civil War or the 100-year war in Europe. Although the current state of organizational life in Eastern Europe cannot be accepted as exemplary, it should be understood as having more complex reasons, which go way beyond the trivial excuse of the Communist legacy.

There might be other implications as well. Probably it is time to reevaluate some concepts and notions. Soon it will not be appropriate to call the ten Eastern European countries which are already members of the EU, post-Communist. Not only due to political correctness, but also because of historical exactitude and current commitments. Soon the world will be celebrating two decades since the fall of the Berlin Wall. By the same token, in the 1960s were Germany and Italy called post-fascist countries? Or could Spain, Portugal, and Greece be referred to as post-authoritarian countries today, having in mind that they brushed away their dictatorial past not very long before 1989? By irony of fate, the current research might turn out to be the last one of its kind. For the next WVS wave, after the recent EU enlargement, post-Communist countries will not be enough in number to form a separate category. Half of them will join the ranks of consolidated democracies; the rest will be unstable free or

authoritarian regimes. Alongside with that the pattern of low participation in voluntary organizations in established democracies will not be surprising at all.

Theory has to be considered with more precision as well. The type of regime is a political concept. Civic participation is as well, but it is not always linked to democratic performance. Therefore when associating it with democracy at all times, it is being transformed into democracy's permanent attribute. At this point all investigations for concomitance between them become redundant and futile. In David Collier's terms (Collier and Levitsky 1997; Collier and Mahon 1993), this would be climbing up Sartori's ladder of generality of the main concept and increasing its attributes at the same time, which is impossible.

1.7. Appendix

Procedures for constructing the models

The graph and the tables are constructed, using data from the following sources:

freedomhouse.org, consulted January 10, 2006;

idea.int, consulted January 13, 2006;

worldvaluessurvey.com, consulted January 15, 2006.

Building the Index of associationalism

The Index of associationalism is the average membership per person for each country. Some general procedures were applied for each WVS wave.

When cases represented the constituent parts of a country, their data were combined in order to form a new case by taking into account the respective weight of the population from the most recent census. Then the former cases were eliminated.

Czech Republic (1990) and Slovakia (1990) were replaced by Czechoslovakia (1990), the population weights being respectively 0.66 and 0.33, according to the 2001 Census.

Germany-West (1990 and 1997) and Germany-East (1990 and 1997) were replaced by Germany (1990 and 1997), the population weights being respectively 0.80 and 0.20, according to a 1990 estimate.

Great Britain (1990 and 1999) and Northern Ireland (1990 and 1999) were replaced by the United Kingdom (1990 and 1999), the population weights being respectively 0.97 and 0.03, according to the 2001 Census.

Serbia (1996 and 2001) and Montenegro (1996 and 2001) were replaced by Yugoslavia (1996 and 2001), the population weights being respectively 0.94 and 0.06, according to the 2002 Census for Serbia, the 2003 Census for Montenegro and a 2005 estimate for Kosovo.

Some cases were excluded, because they were not independent countries.

In 1990 Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were part of the Soviet Union.

Puerto Rico (1995 and 2001) was excluded, because it was a US possession.

For similar reasons, six cases from the 3rd WVS wave - the four Spanish provinces Andalusia, Basque country, Galicia, Valencia, as well as the Russian region of Tambov and the Bosnian Srpska Republic - were eliminated.

For each wave there were also specific procedures.

Second WVS wave

The interviews during the second WVS wave were not conducted in the same year in all countries, but over the 5-year period between 1989 and 1993. The interviews for 26 out of the 32 countries (81%) were conducted, however, in 1990. Among other questions, respondents were asked to indicate if they belonged to 16 types of voluntary organizations, namely those related to: social welfare services for the elderly, handicapped, or deprived people; religion or church; educational, art, music, or cultural activities; syndicalist movements (trade unions); political engagement (parties or groups); local community action on issues like poverty, employment, housing, and racial equality; Third world development or human rights; conservation, environment, and ecology; profession; youth work (e.g. scouts guides, youth clubs, etc.); sports or recreation; women's rights; peace movement; animal rights; health; and others. The category "animal right organizations" was eliminated, because no data was available at the time of the consultation.

Five cases - Belarus, India, Nigeria, South Africa, and Turkey - were discarded, because they contained no data. Spain, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland were presented by two cases for each country, one for the WVS, the other for the EVS. The ones for the WVS were excluded, because they had missing data.

Thus from the initial 47 cases, the 32 remaining ones were classified in the following 3 categories:

18 Consolidated democracies: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, USA.

7 Post-Communist countries: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovenia.

6 Non-Communist, non-authoritarian countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Korea Republic, Malta and Mexico.

China, as a Communist and non-free country, did not fit into any category and could not form a category by itself.

Then the first and the third category were further broken down into:

4 Latin consolidated democracies: France, Italy, Portugal, Spain and the rest - 14 non-Latin consolidated democracies.

2 non-Latin, non-Communist, non-authoritarian countries: Korea Republic, Malta and the rest – 4 Latin, non-Communist, non-authoritarian countries.

Third WVS wave

The interviews during the third WVS wave were not conducted in the same year in all countries but over the 6-year period between 1994 and 1999. From the 49 cases, the interviews for 24 cases (49%) were conducted in 1996 and the interviews for another 11 cases (22%) were conducted in 1995. The third WVS wave provides data on associations differently than the second one did. There are two values for each case. One is a count of active members and the second - inactive members. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they were active or inactive members in nine types of voluntary organizations: church, labor, sport, art, political, environmental, professional, charitable, and "other".

Three countries, Poland, Great Britain, and Pakistan, were eliminated, because the first contained data only for two organizations - labor and political, while the second and the third had no data at all.

The case of Armenia was eliminated, because 96% of the interviewed were inactive members, while 3% of them were active members of voluntary organizations. Such a value would disproportionally distort the group values.

Thus from the initial 62 cases, the 49 remaining ones were classified in the following four categories:

10 Consolidated democracies: Australia, Finland, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, USA.

17 Post-Communist countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine.

17 Non-Communist, non-authoritarian countries: Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, India, Korea Republic, Mexico, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, Taiwan, Turkey, Uruguay, Venezuela.

5 Non-democratic countries: Azerbaijan, Belarus, China, Nigeria, Yugoslavia.

Then the first three categories were further broken down into:

4 non-European countries: Australia, Japan, New Zealand, USA and the rest - 6 European countries.

8 post-Communist countries, non-EU candidates: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine and the rest - 9 post-Communist countries, EU candidates.

7 non-Latin American, non-authoritarian countries: Bangladesh, India, Korea Republic, Philippines, South Africa, Taiwan, Turkey and the rest - 10 Latin American, non-authoritarian countries.

Fourth WVS wave

The interviews during the fourth WVS wave were conducted during the 5-year period between 1999 and 2003, although from the 59 cases in total, the interviews for 31 of them (53%) were conducted in 1999, the interviews for another 14 of them (24%) were conducted in 2001, and the interviews for other

7 cases (12%) were conducted in 2000. This wave returned back to the classification of 16 types of organizations like the second one with the only difference that animal right organizations were not a separate category, but were bundled with the conservation and environment organizations.

10 cases - Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Morocco (2)-second sample, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey - were eliminated, because they contained no data. Spain (1999) was excluded, since it was repeating.

Thus from the initial 73 cases, the 59 ones remaining were classified in the following four categories:

19 Consolidated democracies: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, USA.

18 Post-Communist countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, Yugoslavia.

16 Non-Communist, non-authoritarian countries: Argentina, Bangladesh, Chile, India, Korea Republic, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, Peru, Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Tanzania, Turkey, Uganda, Venezuela.

6 Non-democratic countries: Algeria, Belarus, China, Kyrgyz Republic, Vietnam, Zimbabwe.

Then the first three categories were further broken down into:

4 Latin consolidated democracies: France, Italy, Portugal, Spain and the rest - 15 non-Latin consolidated democracies; also 3 non-European consolidated democracies: Canada, Japan, USA and the rest - 16 European consolidated democracies; finally the 13 non-Latin European consolidated democracies are: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, USA.

8 post-Communist countries, non-EU candidates; Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, Yugoslavia and the rest - 10 post-Communist countries, EU candidates.

5 Latin American, non-Communist non-authoritarian countries: Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela and the rest - 11 non-Latin American, non-authoritarian countries.

The average membership per person for each country was calculated by dividing the sum of all memberships for all organizations by the number of the persons interviewed. Only for the Third WVS wave, where the number of interviewed differed for each organization, first I calculated the average membership for each organization in each country and then summed the results. It is also important to note that only for this wave the membership was estimated as the sum of the active and non-active members, since their numbers separately were ostensibly small.

Correlations between the Index of associationalism and the Index of freedom

The index of freedom is the sum of the Freedom House ratings for political rights and civil liberties for each country during the year of the respective interview for the WVS. Those ratings range from 1 to 7 (whole numbers only), the better performance being assigned a smaller number. For this reason the sign of the correlation coefficient has to be reversed. To be noted also that there is no relation between the correlation coefficient of a group of countries and the correlation coefficients of its respective subgroups.

Correlations between the Index of associationalism and the Index of electoral participation

The Index of electoral participation corresponded to the turnout rate, measured as a ratio between the number of persons that voted and the voting age population. Several preparatory steps were initiated. 5 cases - China (1990, 1995, 2001) and Yugoslavia (1996, 2001) were eliminated, because they contained no data. Armenia was excluded for the same reasons as in the previous experiment. From the remaining 135 cases, less than 30% (38) corresponded exactly to the year of their respective WVS interview. In the case of the remaining 97, the choice fell on the election year that was closer to the year of their respective WVS interview. The year of the WVS interviews for the following four cases was between two equally distant years of elections: Brazil (1992), Moldova (1996), and USA (1995, 1999). The choice was made in favor

of the later year. In the following 10 cases: Algeria (2002), Bangladesh (2002), Chile (2000), Macedonia (2001), Morocco (1) (2001), Singapore (2002), Slovakia (1999), Turkey (2001), Vietnam (2001), Zimbabwe (2001) – there was no data for the Voting Age Population (VAP). In those cases the registered vote (RV) served as a proxy.

CHAPTER 2

ASSOCIATIONAL CULTURE IN PRE-COMMUNIST BULGARIA:

CONSIDERATIONS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

2.1. Introduction

In much recent research, the number of the voluntary organizations, their membership, and activities are the major measures of civil society and social capital in a given country. When such measures are applied to Eastern Europe, research tends to present a picture of a region with an underdeveloped civil society and low stock of social capital. Often this current weakness, which would be hard to dispute, is attributed to a long-standing absence of civicness. This paper takes issue with such accounts of the reasons for meager community life now, using the case of Bulgaria, one of the European ex-Communist states. Rather than concentrating on the organizational status quo during the Communist regime and after its collapse, the article stretches the time horizon back to the foundation of the modern state in 1878. Presenting original empirical data on Bulgarian community life, this historical journey back in time unequivocally documents not only that social capital and civil society existed, but also that they were robust and active. For the first time, and relying on the Bulgarian literature, a historical analysis explores and compares the country's aggregate associational life. Thus, the paper suggests a correction to the popular view about the absence of organizational culture, contributing to a growing body of recent research that has done so for other countries.

2.2. Civil Society and Communist Regimes

A preponderant number of studies, particularly those in the 1990s, found that in European ex-Communist countries social capital was low and civil society weak, as compared to the West; perhaps more interesting than just comparing these countries to the West, however, are efforts to assess the situation across time. A growing body of literature is now devoted to looking at the history of civil society associations and social capital in pre-Communist and Communist Eastern Europe. As this work is done, it is becoming increasingly clear that opinions are quite divergent about the historical record. Indeed, there is so little consensus that the literature can usefully be grouped into six categories, ranging from complete denial of associational activities in the past to the discovery of persistent civic engagement across time.

There are three groups that find social capital and civil society dilapidated in the historical past. The first cluster of authors maintains that these societies have always lacked stocks of social capital. For example, Colton argues that "history predisposes Russians towards mistrust rather than trust and toward acceptance of what the government does rather than self-confident influence over it." (Colton 1995, 748). Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer explain that Russians have always had high degrees of trust in their immediate social network and high distrust in the state (Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer 1997). For them civil society could not be legal or autonomous; to do so risked its

classification as anti-state, since autonomy could only have political implications.

Others are categorical about the detrimental effect of the Communist period, but do not consider at all the situation before it. For instance, Hjøllund, Paldam, and Svendsen describe the Soviet Union as an "atomized society," that is, as a society with no social capital (Hjøllund, Paldam, and Svendsen 2001, 4). Nichols suggests that Russia is best understood as a country suffering from a virtually complete lack of social capital, because the Soviet regime deliberately prevented social networks from emerging as the few embryonic autonomous structures were repressed. He underlines that "we can easily observe throughout the Soviet period the manifest absence of the networks and associations that we would associate with social capital" (Nichols 1996, 633).

More frequent are studies that emphasize the negative impact of the Communist period, describing it as destructive of civil society but nevertheless they implicitly recognize the prior existence of civil society and social capital. One can only destroy something that exists. According to Mondak and Gearing during the Communist era, numerous social and political constraints limited civil engagement in communities throughout Central and Eastern Europe (Mondak and Gearing 1998), while according to Bădescu, Sum, and Uslaner Communist regimes discouraged or tried to control any form of collective action (Bădescu et al. 2004). Under such circumstances the overwhelming majority of civil society organizations were created and maintained by the

party-state and these organizations owed their mission, organizational structures, and financial support to the regime (Bădescu et al. 2004, 323). Fidrmuc and Gërxhani posit that Communist regimes destroyed most or all of the existing social capital in these countries, which helps account for the slow pace of transition after the regime collapse (Fidrmuc and Gërxhani 2005). For Lovell as well the legacies of Communism remain a key factor in explaining why the levels of trust in post-Communist states are low. Communism had the effect of destroying trust between people and government and between people themselves (Lovell 2001). For their part, Bădescu and Sum try to weigh the effects on social capital of pre-Communism and Communism by comparing Transylvania and the rest of Romania (Bădescu and Sum 2005). The persistent differences they find suggest that the Communist legacy does not provide a full explanation. Nevertheless, they conclude that one cannot underestimate the impact of Communist regimes and underline that throughout Eastern Europe, "the Communist legacy with varying degrees of severity had effects which were independent of any pre-Communist conditions" (Bădescu and Sum 2005, 118).

The next three groups of scholars, often based on more recent research, find evidence of social capital and civil society organization in Eastern Europe's past, frequently providing explicit critiques of earlier assessments. A fourth group of authors finds associational life in Eastern Europe throughout the pre-Communist and Communist periods. For Vari, the recent civil sector of Central and East Europe has its roots both in the pre-World War Two period

and in the socialist era: “Mushrooming of civil society organizations after the 1989–90 revolutions can be explained by the rich traditions of prewar civil society, as well as by the people’s reaction to the suppression of civil initiatives under state socialist rule.” (Vari 1998). Petro convincingly demonstrates that Russian émigrés and the Russian Orthodox Church represented an alternative democratic political culture that constituted civil society and existed before and during Communism (Petro 1995). Using a civic community index, Marsh outlines potential sources of social capital in Russia’s history and cultural traditions and produces evidence that social capital existed in many regions of Russia (Marsh 2000).

The fifth group, albeit dealing only with the Communist period, claims to discover associational life unique to the region and the regime. While in the former GDR (East Germany) a third sector did not exist independently of the state control and ideology, according to Anheier, Priller, and Zimmer many service clubs fulfilled functions similar to those of nonprofit organizations, particularly in the fields of welfare, social services, sports, culture, and recreation. Particularly at the local level, they were de facto nonprofit organizations (Anheier, Priller, and Zimmer 2000). Examining the case of Bulgarian ecological organizations, Cellarius and Staddon argue that the Hunters and Fishermen’s Union should not be put aside merely because of its close association with the Communist state (Cellarius and Staddon 2002). Smolar notes that “emerging islands of civil society” under Communism

burgeoned as unofficial political opposition led by prominent figures such as Czechoslovakia's Václav Havel, Poland's Jacek Kuroń and Adam Michnik, and Hungary's János Kis (Smolar 1996, 25-28). After performing ethnographical research in Novosibirsk, Russia, Busse argues that reports about the non-existence of social capital in Russia are greatly exaggerated. Busse observes that "social capital varies across societies; the character of social capital present in a particular society depends upon historical and structural conditions and behavioral patterns" (Busse 2001, 1); if social capital is primarily related to a societal network, then one can find that under the former Soviet regime distinctive patterns of stable and dense social networks were created (Busse 2001, 36). For her part, Letki observes that although voluntary organizations could not operate under the Communist regime in 10 European countries, some forms of interpersonal trust existed in order to assist citizens during economic hardships and experiences of political arbitrariness (Letki 2004). As Letki and Evans later contend, the distrust of state structures should not be mistaken for distrust of fellow citizens (Letki and Evans 2005). Letki even goes further in asserting that membership in a non-democratic organization can be an efficient school of democracy, and thus at least this part of Communist legacy actually assisted the development of participatory political culture (Letki 2004, 675).

Finally, a sixth group of researchers examines only the pre-Communist past of East-European countries and documents the existence of considerable social activism. Salamon, Anheier, List, Toepler, and Sokolowski look at the

history of nonprofit activity in five European ex-Communist countries and in the associational history of each country uncover rich civic traditions (Salamon et al. 1999). For instance, the early origins of Czech philanthropy were linked to Christianity, with the first foundations appearing as early as the thirteenth century. The 1930s witnessed the blossoming of 5,130 registered societies and the nonprofit sector accounted for a quarter of total social care expenditures (Salamon et al. 1999, 291). Hungary always manifested a strong tradition of "oppositional" voluntary movements which played an important role in the fight for political, economic, and cultural independence and for the preservation of national identity. During the first half of the nineteenth century an extensive system of cooperative partnerships between local governments and private foundations co-financing public welfare institutions emerged and remained active until the Second World War (Salamon et al. 1999, 310). Since the Middle Ages two key traditions marked the evolution of Polish voluntary activity: one was the religious charity and philanthropy fostered by the Catholic Church; and the second was a secular welfare tradition marked by contributions of the aristocracy and interventions of the municipalities as early as the fourteenth century (Salamon et al. 1999, 331). Malová regards the historical circumstances of each country as determinants of the strength and vitality of its civil society. She indicates that Slovakia enjoyed a long tradition of voluntary associations, which had already begun to develop as early as the eighteenth century and had reached several thousand by the beginning of the twentieth century (Malová 2003). Magner claims that the origins of Polish foundations go

back to the twelfth century and enumerates religious, educational, sports, and patriotic associations that existed when Poland was under Prussian, Austrian, and Russian rule (Magner 2003). Nemes investigates nineteenth century Hungary's history and finds more than 500 civic institutions – cultural and music societies, carnivals, reading and social clubs, women's associations – that mushroomed as a result of patriotic surge by 1848. He generalizes that "from Bucharest to Berlin, similar institutions would emerge across central and eastern Europe during the nineteenth century" (Nemes 2001, 803).

Considered together, these more recent studies remind us of the need to contextualize and turn back to the historical roots of social capital and civil society. Taking these lessons to heart, this paper constructs a detailed analysis of Bulgaria, an ex-Communist country that has as yet received less attention than others. Following the lead of the last group of studies that pay attention to history before Communism, this research expands the temporal framework. Sensitive to methodology, it adds the qualitative dimension alongside the overall quantitative assessment, by collecting and collating original empirical evidence for the history of associational life in Bulgaria.

2.3. Organizational Networks in Bulgaria since 1878

Bulgaria has been chosen, first, because it has been awarded almost no attention as a separate case study. Second, it has been depicted (Sotiropoulos 2005; Mungiu-Pippidi 2005) as one of the Eastern European countries with less

social capital and inferior civil society. Yet the empirical evidence will show that taking a longer temporal horizon changes the findings dramatically. The empirical analysis will document that vigorous organizational culture existed during the pre-Communist period. The data, in fact, provides sufficient grounds to debunk the generally accepted view that Bulgaria, as an ex-Communist country, has always had weak civil society and low social capital.

As one of the newly created states, Bulgaria had the poorest economic structure in Europe, second only to Albania. The majority of its population was involved in agriculture, but due to the late modernization processes its cities soon emerged as new centers of capitalist relations and class division. The political system was characterized as a monarchical regime during which coup d'états and suspensions of the constitution were not rare. Nevertheless, Bulgaria possessed an extremely rich history of associational life dating from its pre-Communist period. More than 100 nonprofit organizations were active in the 1930s. If we use the International Classification of Nonprofit Organizations (ICNPO), a typology developed by Salamon and Anheier (Salamon and Anheier 1992; 1996),[8] many categories are populated across a diverse range.

[8] Three comprehensive classification systems differentiate the nonprofit sector: the UN's International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC); the European Community's General Industrial Classification of Economic Activities (NACE); and, the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) developed by the National Council of Charitable Statistics in the United States. Finding them useful, but not sufficient, Salamon and Anheier (Salamon and Anheier 1992; 1996) developed a compatible classification system, the International Classification of Nonprofit Organizations (ICNPO) which classifies nonprofit establishments into 12 major groups based on their primary economic activity.

In Bulgaria there have been cultural and educational organizations in the fields of geography, botany, economics, sociology, and scenic arts. Common interests united radio listeners, theater spectators, Esperantists and English speakers. The Alliance Française – an organization promoting the French language and culture outside of France – had 662 members in 1939. Within this domain the most impressive organization was the Union of Popular Choirs in Bulgaria (*Sŭiuz na narodnite khorove v Bŭlgariia*) with 20,995 members in 220 clubs in 1938.

Recreational organizations include sports such as cycling, gymnastics, horse riding, ski, tennis, and car racing. The First Bulgarian Kegelklub (*Pŭrvi bŭlgarski Kegelklub*) was the bowling association with a little less than 200 members, all from the capital. Two organizations impressed most with their broad membership – the Union of Bulgarian Bicyclists (*Bŭlgarski koloezdachen sŭiuz*) which in 1939 had 223 societies with 26,144 members, and the Union of Bulgarian Gymnastic Societies "Iunak" (*Sŭiuz na bŭlgarskite gimnasticheski druzhestva "Iunak"*) with 50,000 members in 363 societies in 1938. Alumni of the high schools of commerce, the American schools, the postal-telegraph school, the public agricultural schools, the carpentry middle school, the free university, pupil's parents, students, retirees, firefighters, young scouts, freemasons, animal lovers, Rotarians, and friends of the cooperative movement, all had their own clubs.

Philanthropic societies, although low in membership, were very diverse. Some examples include the society "Samarianka" (*Druzhestvo "Samarianka")*, the charitable society "Evdokia" (*Blagotvoritelno druzhestvo "Evdokiia" – Iaslite*), the charitable committee "Vseh Skorbiashchih Radost" (*Blagotvoritelen komitet "Vseh skorbiashtikh radost"*), and the society "Free Canteens for Pupils" ("*Bezplatni uchenicheski trapezarii"*). The Union of the Homeless and the Renters in Bulgaria (*Sŭiuz na bezdomnitsite i naematelite v Bŭlgariia*), the Society for Fighting Crime (*Druzhestvo za borba s prestŭpnostta*), Union for Protection of Children (*Sŭiuz za zakrila na detsata v Bŭlgariia)*, the Society for Fighting Tuberculosis (*Druzhestvo za borba protiv tuberkolozata v Bŭlgariia*), Union of the Cities in Bulgaria (*Sŭiuz na bŭlgaskite gradove)*, the Society for Fighting Juvenile Delinquency and Protection of Prisoners (*Druzhestvo za borba s detskata prestŭpnost i pokrovitelstvo na zatvornitsite*), illustrate the plethora of civic and advocacy organizations in the country.

Minorities – Jews, Armenians, Albanians, Turks – were not left out of organizational life. Jews were most active and within their organizations members always numbered over 1,000. Very often minorities' organizations were educational or cultural, like the Union of Albanian Cultural Societies "Dashira" (*Sŭiuz na albanskite kulturni druzhestva "Dŭshira")*, the Armenian Cultural and Educational Society "Dr. Benne" *(Armensko kulturno-prosvetno druzhestvo "Dr. Benne")*, and the Armenian Educational Union "Aratch"

(*Armenski obrazovatelen sŭiuz "Arach"*). Sometimes they were related to sports, like the Union of the Zionist Gymnastic Societies "Makabi" (S*ŭiuz na tsionisticheskite gimnasticheski druzhestva "Makabi")* or devoted to charity, like the Albanian Charitable Society "Gueorgui Kastrioti" (*Albansko blagotvoritelno druzhestvo "Georgi Kastrioti"*). In certain cases they were composed of a specific demographic segment, for example, the Jewish Scout Organization "Hashomer Hatzair" (*Evreiska mladezhka organizatsiia "Ashomer Atsair"*), the Women's International Zionist Organization (*Vsesvetska zhenska tsionisticheska organizatsiia*), and the Albanian Women's Society "Albanka" (*Albansko zhensko blagotvoritelno druzhestvo "Albanka"*).

Bulgarians encouraged foreign nationals – Russians, Ukranians, Yugoslavs, Czechoslovaks, Hungarians, Britons, Germans, and Italians – to establish their own societies. All of them were located in the biggest cities in the country and had no branches elsewhere. Among the Slavic organizations that had most members the Russians had four: Bulgarian–Soviet Society (*Bŭlgaro-sŭvetsko druzhestvo*); Representation of All-Russian City Union and Zemski City Committee (*Predstavitelstvo na vseruskiia sŭiuz na gradovete i zemsko-gradskiia komitet v Bŭlgariia*); Union for Protection of Russian Women and Children in Bulgaria (*Druzhestvo za zashtita na ruskata zhena i dete v Bŭlgariia*); and, Union of Russian National Youth (S*ŭiuz na ruskata natsionalna mladezh*). Ukrainians had two: Ukrainian Cultural Union (*Ukrainsko kulturno obedinenie*), and the Ukrainian Society "Ukrainska

Gromada" in Bulgaria *(Ukrainsko kulturno prosvetno druzhestvo "Ukrainska Gromada" v Bŭlgariia)*. The Bulgarian–Yugoslav Society (*Bŭlgaro–iugoslaviansko druzhestvo*) had most members, with some 930 in 1937–38. The Germans had a German Colony in Sofia (*Germanska koloniia v Sofiia*) and a Society for Bulgarian–German Cultural Rapprochement (*Druzhestvo za bŭlgaro-germansko kulturno sblizhenie*).

The Educational and Charitable Society of Adventist Christians (*Blagotvoritelno i prosvetno druzhestvo "Hristiansko adventsko obshtestvo"*), the Muslim Organization "Istikbal" (*Sofiiska miusiulmanska obshtokulturna prosvetna organizatsiia "Istikbal*"), and the Bulgarian Theosophical Society (*Bŭlgarsko teosofsko obshtestvo*), prove that religious congregations and associations were abundant and pluralistic. Women, students, and the youth had their own Christian societies; yet the Union of Orthodox Christian Societies (*Obsht sŭiuz na pravoslavnite khristiianski bratstva v Bŭlgariia*) boasted most members – in 1937–38 it had 770 societies with 39,922 members nationwide.

This is, of course, only one snapshot of pre-Communist organizational life and does not follow the life story of these organizations. This would be a Herculean task. As we know, informal organizations are born, wither away, disappear, and sometimes even resurrected. In order, though, to get a better sense of the dynamic in the story of Bulgarian associational life, social capital, and civil society, the next section focuses on the associational history of some leading Bulgarian voluntary organizations.

2.4. Leading Bulgarian Non-profit Organizations

The choice of organizations is far from random; each has been selected for three reasons. First, these organizations were continuously active, had a large number of affiliates, and formed nationwide networks. Second, their membership was consistently high. Third, the most complete information is available for them, a factor no doubt a consequence of the first and the second characteristics. In what follows the paper provides a narrative account of leading organizations, which can be classified into two groups: those centralized organizations with local branches open to anyone; and those diverse independent organizations which were created in order to protect or promote certain groups of the population.

2.4.1. Centralized Voluntary Organizations

2.4.1.1. The "Chitalishte"

The *chitalishte,*[9] or reading house, has long been a key component of Bulgarian associational life The *chitalishte* was both an educational and a nationalist institution, linked therefore to democracy (via education) and national identity. The Bulgarian Statistical Yearbook (1910-1946) devotes many pages to this organization, more than any other.[10] During the 1930s this

[9] *Chitalishte* literally means "a place to read" (coming from the Bulgarian verb to read).

[10] The Bulgarian Statistical Yearbook (1910-1946) is an annual publication of the National Statistical Institute. The newly created Office of Statistics of the Bulgarian Kingdom issued its first volume in 1909. Until 1944

annual publication contained 25 pages of various data about the *chitalishte*. Data was broken down according to the rural or urban type for all administrative regions; according to organizational history – newly established, disbanded, or merged; public or private; Bulgarian or foreign (Armenian, Jewish, and Turkish). Members were counted by sex, profession, and place of residence. Other reporting covered personnel (permanent, temporary, and voluntary), activities, buildings, libraries, and property. Books and periodicals were classified according to their genre and the origin of authors. Reports on revenues and expenses were very detailed with never less than 10 budget lines as well as information on contributions by origin, as well as debt, donations, and dedicated funds.

The birth of the idea of *chitalishte* was partially influenced from abroad. The importance of education and its transfer to the masses was viewed as a continuation of the Renaissance in Western Europe. During the sixteenth century the Germans established *Leseverein* in Hamburg and Bremen,[11] the French had *cabinets de lecture* in the early 1700s,[12] the Italians organized *gabinetti di lettura* in Padova and Verona in the nineteenth century, and the British institutionalized public libraries in 1850. The Balkan countries followed suit. Similar organizations appeared during the nineteenth century in Serbia,

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one volume appeared every year except the following: 1913–22, 1923–24, 1929–30, 1943–46.

[11] *Leseverein* literally means "reading association" (the German verb "lesen" means to read).

[12] For more on the French *cabinet de lecture*, see Pain (Pain 1828) and Fustier (Fustier 1883).

Croatia, Montenegro, Slovenia, Greece, and Turkey. What is different is that once these institutions accomplished their goals, they gradually disappeared from social life, while in Bulgaria the idea of the *chitalishte* was enlarged and preserved until the present – in effect becoming the center of national cultural life.

The origin of the *chitalishte* dates to when Bulgaria was part of the Ottoman Empire.[13] A Bulgarian literary society was established in 1824 in the town of Braşov, Romania. Two dozen *chitalishta*, disseminating Bulgarian literature, were located in Romania and Serbia at this time. The first three to be established on Bulgarian territory appeared in 1856. Prior to 1878 and Bulgarian independence, a total of 197 *chitalishta* appeared, publishing 86 periodicals of their own. In 1911, some 158 delegates came together to form the Union of Bulgarian *Chitalishta* (*Sŭiuz na bŭlgarskite chitalishta*) in the capital Sofia, where its magazine *Chitalishte* began to be published after this first congress.

Given that the first *chitalishte* were established in the cities, they attracted intelligentsia and town-dwellers that were not only better educated, but also radically minded and devoted to the idea of national liberation and independence. According to Gavrilova, Daskalova, Alexandrov, Kirilov, Chichek, and Lisichkova, the spread of the *chitalishte* followed the classic

[13] Data on the *chitalishte* are from the two most extensive and comprehensive studies ever conducted on *chitalishte* in Bulgaria by Kondarev, Sirakov, and Cholov (Kondarev, Sirakov, and Cholov 1972; 1979).

pattern of dissemination of cultural movements – from the center towards the periphery, from towns towards villages (Gavrilova et al. 2000). Thus, the *chitalishte* played a role in awakening the patriotic feelings of the Bulgarian population for self-determination. Revolutionaries were convinced that no freedom could exist without education. Wealthy nationalist Bulgarians donated both cash and books. Financial resources also came in the form of membership dues, fund-raising events, and entrepreneurial activities. The state provided very little support to the *chitalishte*.

We can describe this institution as a national civic club focused on the public activity of Bulgarian citizens. It became a forum for political discussion, where Bulgarians could share their views on public issues of local and national importance.[14] It provided supplementary education in order to expand the knowledge acquired in churches and schools. The books, periodicals, maps, and public talks furnished information by which the latest socioeconomic inventions, geographical discoveries, technological developments, aesthetic ideas, and literary masterpieces became familiar to the population.

Other activities included the establishment of choirs and orchestras, of amateur dance and theatrical groups. Amateur theaters were important for the cultural life of small towns and villages with no professional companies. The *chitalishte* regularly organized concerts and dances with the participation of

[14] Probably the best source of information about the *chitalishte* before the liberation of Bulgaria in 1878 is the study by Chilingirov (Chilingirov 1930).

guest performers. The tradition of keeping museum collections and organizing exhibitions (archaeological and ethnographic) exists even nowadays. In the 1920s, movie halls became a major income-generating source. The period between 1926 and 1930 was particularly active, as hundreds of *chitalishte* were established around the country. The portrait of *chitalishte* can also be painted in numbers. In 1929 Bulgaria had 1,228 *chitalishte* and 107 members per 10,000 inhabitants (60,913 members). Ten years later, in 1939, numbers had risen to 2,600 and 230 members per 10,000 inhabitants (145,205 members).

2.4.1.2. The Bulgarian Red Cross

The Bulgarian Red Cross (*Bŭlgarski cherven krŭst*) movement was one of the first pan-Bulgarian networks of organizations in Bulgaria, federating local Red Cross societies.[15] Private initiatives by medical doctors appeared during the Russian–Turkish War for Bulgarian liberation in 1877–78. But it was not until 1878 when the first society of the Red Cross was created in the city of Sliven. Five independent Red Cross Societies were founded in various cities and then in 1885 the national society of the Bulgarian Red Cross was established and Bulgaria signed the Geneva Convention.

The Bulgarian Red Cross ensured humanitarian protection and assistance for victims of all wars in which Bulgaria was involved. They also

[15] One of the most comprehensive publications on the Bulgarian Red Cross is the jubilee edition dedicated to its 120th anniversary (Topuzov and Gladilov 1998).

organized missions abroad, such as one in Manchuria during the Russian–Japanese war of 1904–05 and that near Ekaterinodar, Russia in 1914–16. In peacetime the organization helped the population affected by natural disasters. These included, for example, the fire in the city of Kotel in 1894, the devastating famine in the region of Povolzhie, Russia in 1921–23, the earthquake in southern Bulgaria in 1928, the flood in northeastern Bulgaria in 1939, and various epidemics of tuberculosis, cholera, typhus, and malaria. Red Cross members raised funds and supported the Bulgarian refugees from Macedonia and Thrace after the Ilinden revolt in 1903 and in 1924–28. Until 1944 the Bulgarian Red Cross organized free canteens for pupils in 16 cities and 6 villages, in addition to 18 camping and rehabilitation centers nationwide. It also ran several nursing homes and orphanages.

Training future nurses in specialized courses started with the foundation of the organization, but it was not until 1900 when a nurse training school was created with the help of Russian nurses. Later, American nurses – who used Florence Nightingale's system of training – organized another school for nurses. In 1909 the Red Cross Hospital was built and the emergency service, *Bŭrza pomosht*, was created in 1937. Sanitary campaigns began in the 1920s and during the Second World War the Bulgarian Red Cross society started blood collection for transfusions (Gospodinov and Angelov 1981). Its periodic publication *Izvestia* has been published since 1916. In 1921 the Bulgarian Youth Red Cross was established as an independent organization, with its own

magazine, lectures, courses, and activities. Between 1929 and 1939 it increased from 1,358 societies with 104,620 members to 3,039 societies with 232,270 members nationwide. As for the Bulgarian Red Cross, during the ten-year period between 1929 and 1939, it expanded from 103 societies with 35 members per 10,000 people (19,806 members) to 914 societies with 87 members per 10,000 people (55,029 members).

2.4.1.3. The Hunters

In 1884 the first Bulgarian association of hunters was founded in the city of Veliko Tŭrnovo.[16] Two years later, it became the Hunters' Society *Strelets* (*Lovno druzhestvo Strelets*) with its own statutes and governing body. In 1895 the first monthly newspaper *Lovets* began its regular publication in Sofia. Three years later representatives of 66 societies established the Central Hunters' Society "Falcon" (*Tsentralno lovno druzhestvo "Sokol"*) in Sofia. For a 10-year period starting in 1929 "Sokol" ranged from 140 to 105 societies and from 32,175 to 35,650 members (56 members per 10,000 inhabitants). In 1934–35 there were 135 regional societies with 40,386 members. The organization became a member of the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) in 1931. Between 1922 and 1937 seven national hunters' fairs took place. The hunters had their own flag and march. The organization tried to improve the laws for the protection of game from poachers and for the

[16] Most of the organizational history of the hunters is presented in the jubilee publication of the Union, see Stancheva and Vasilev (Stancheva and Vasilev 1998).

preservation of wildlife through enforcing quotas. Also, it allocated funds for specialized publications and for its own nationwide guard.

The idea of founding an organization of the young hunters (*Organizatsiia na mladite streltsi*) was promulgated in 1923 during the 7th congress of the organization and realized in 1933. The first hunters' museum was opened in Pleven in 1923. The national (the first one was held in Sofia in 1938) and international trophy exhibitions became important activities for the organization. Some of the local organizations started building their own farms and raising game (the first one was near Varna in 1929) or fish for their own needs and for export. The primary goal of the Union remained the protection of the game in the country as well as the maintenance of species diversity. Scores of local societies had their own buildings, libraries, and museums with trophies and hunting weapons.

2.4.1.4. War Veterans

Participants in each war created various patriotic organizations, like the Society of War Volunteers "Shipka" (*Pobornichesko opŭlchensko druzhestvo "Shipka"*) in 1887 after the Russian–Turkish war (1877–78) and the Organization of War Volunteers "Slivnitsa" (*Dobrovolcheska organizatsiia "Slivnitsa"*) in 1908 after the Serbian–Bulgarian war of 1885.[17] The two Balkan wars and the First World War triggered the establishment of

[17] The history of most Bulgarian patriotic organizations can be found in Ianchev (Ianchev 2000).

organizations like the Union of the Cavaliers of the Bravery Cross (*Sŭiuz na kavalerite na Ordena za khrabrost*) in 1934, the Union of Warriors from the Front (*Sŭiuz na boĭtsite ot fronta*) in 1935, the Union of Young Warriors Volunteers (*Sŭiuz na mladite boĭtsi-dobrovoltsi*) in 1937, the Joint Union of War Victims (*Obsht sŭiuz na postradalite ot voĭnite*), and the Union of the Macedonian–Odrin Societies of War Volunteers (*Sŭiuz na makedono-odrinskite opŭlchenski druzhestva*).

The Union of Officers in Reserve (*Sŭiuz na ofitserite ot zapasa*) was founded in 1907 when 34 delegates from 11 clubs of officers and generals in reserve, representing about 700 members, gathered in Sofia. A list of the officers in the reserve at the end of 1910 contained 3,985 names (some 20% of the total reserve). The veterans started publishing the newspaper *Voenen glas* (since 1908), *Voenna Bŭlgaria* (1913), and *Otechestvo* (1921). At that time in Europe reservist officers organized clubs which alongside guaranteeing social protection organized cultural activities – such as horse races, excursions, and balls. Their Bulgarian counterparts fought mainly for increasing the pensions and reducing the taxes of their members. The Union of Officers in Reserve always tried to be above party political bickering, but sought to remain engaged with national problems. Its membership increased particularly after mandated reductions in the size of the Bulgarian army imposed by peace treaties. In 1921 the Union had 37 societies with 3,245 members, by 1924 it almost doubled: 75 societies with 6,000 members. And from 7,500 in 1940 the membership

increased to 9,700 in 1942. However, the Sofia society, which comprised almost half of members, left the Union, thus marking the beginning of its decline.

In 1909 Bulgarian non-commissioned officers in Sofia established the Society of Non-Commissioned Officers in Reserve "Gurguliat" (*Zapasno podofitsersko druzhestvo "Gurguliat"*). The Union of the Non-commissioned Officers in Reserve (UNOR) (*Sŭiuz na podofitserite ot zapasa*) was founded the following year with the help of activists from the Union of Officers in Reserve. In 1928–29 the UNOR had 575 societies with 25,234 members, and ten years later they had 30,429 members in 542 societies. Its newspaper was *Podofitserska zashtita*. Although UNOR had similar social functions to the Union of Officers in Reserve, they never merged, because members of the latter regarded themselves as superior to the former. A Federation of the Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers in Reserve (*Federatsia na zapasnite ofitseri i podofitseri*) appeared in 1922. The same year Communist officers in reserve founded another Union – the People's Union of Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers in Reserve (*Naroden sŭiuz na ofitserite i podofitserite ot zapasa*) with its own newspaper *Narodna zashtita*. It lasted until 1923 and reported 3,000 members and 27 societies. Often the Union proposed a merger of all patriotic, sports, and hunters organizations – an idea that was finally realized in 1943 with the participation of five formations. The breakdown of the membership of the new Union of All Reservists (*Sŭiuz na zapasnoto voinstvo*),

with its grand total of 122,766 members was: Union of Officers in Reserve 9,922; Union of Non-Commissioned Officers in Reserve 28,349; Union of the Cavaliers of the Bravery Cross 19,571; Union of Warriors from the Front 54,792; and, Union of Young Warriors Volunteers 10,097.

2.4.1.5. The Bulgarian Tourist Union

The Bulgarian Tourist Union (*Bŭlgarski Turisticheski Sŭiuz*) is a single association that continuously established spin-off organizations for more specialized leisure activities.[18] The prominent writer Aleko Konstantinov founded the first Club of Bulgarian Tourists (*Klub na bŭlgarskite turisti*) in Sofia in 1895. By 1902 more than 20 clubs existed around the country, mostly in the large cities. Villages also started establishing their tourist organizations in the 1940s. Helmut Brooks founded the Young Geologist Tourist Group (*Turisticheska sbirka Geolog*) in 1908 in the port city of Rousse. The Bulgarian Tourist Union began publishing a collection of specialized books and guides in 1901 and a magazine the following year. Although intellectuals started the tourist movement, membership in the tourist clubs was open to everybody regardless of religion, party affiliation, or sex.

In 1923 enthusiasts founded a Mountain Rescue Service (*Planinska spasitelna sluzhba*) which functions on a voluntary basis. In 1925 they created

[18] Data is from the jubilee collection for the 90th anniversary of the Bulgarian Tourist Union (Sŭbev 1986), a work that also offers a chronological history and detailed bibliography of the tourist movement in Bulgaria.

the Bulgarian Automobile and Touring Club (*Bŭlgarski avtomobilen i turing klub*), and related clubs followed quickly for ski-orientation, water tourism, and bicycle touring. In 1925 the Bulgarian Tourist Union became a member of the Association of the Slavic Tourist Clubs (*Asotsiatsiia na slavianskite turisticheski druzhestva*) in Prague, and in 1932 of the Balkan Tourist Federation (*Balkanska turisticheska federatsiia*). In 1929 members of the Bulgarian Tourist Union established the Bulgarian Speleological Club (*Bŭlgarsko peshterno druzhestvo*) and the Bulgarian Alpine Club (*Bŭlgarski planinski klub*).

Members organized a wide range of activities – alongside hiking, outings, journeys, excursions, expeditions, visits to mountains, rivers, lakes, caves, and seashores – they participated in celebrations in the open air, winter tourist carnivals, photography and painting exhibitions, orientations, voluntary work on planting trees, building and equipping chalets, marking routes, and other environmental initiatives. Very often groups organized amateur choirs, vocal, and instrumental groups. Members of tourist clubs have held annual congresses since 1901 and they inaugurated their own uniform and insignia. The number of tourist clubs nationwide increased from 44 in 1929 to 89 in 1939, while the membership increased from 7 to 11 members per 10, 000 people (from 4,002 to 6,659 members). For the same period the Union of Young Tourists (*Iunosheski turisticheski sŭiuz*) recorded 79 societies with 24

members per 10,000 inhabitants (13,725 members) during 1929–30 and 86 clubs with 27 members per 10,000 inhabitants (17,226 members) in 1938–39.

2.4.1.6. Philatelists

Although not very widely-supported, philatelic organizations are a good indicator of a diverse and pluralist civil society.[19] The first Bulgarian specialized philatelic monthly publication, *Timbrofil*, came out in 1891 (3 issues only) in the city of Panagiurishte, while *Glas na balgarskoto timbrofilsko druzhestvo* started in Plovdiv in 1893 (6 issues). The first philatelic society in Bulgaria was founded in the same city and in the same year. The Philatelic Society in Sofia was established in 1925. In 1929 it had 160 members, while in 1931 its membership amounted to 270. A second society – "Balkan" – appeared in Sofia in 1937. A third was the so-called "Scientific Philatelist Club." The first national stamp exhibition took place in Sofia in 1930. Organized Bulgarian philatelists joined the FIP (Fédération internationale de philatelie) in 1936, before establishing their national union. The Union of Bulgarian Philatelic Societies (*Sûiuz na bûlgarskite filatelisticheski druzhestva*) was founded by representatives of 13 societies from 11 cities in 1938. Alongside its monthly bulletin, *Poshtenska marka*, a second magazine – *Bulgarska marka* – was issued. The Union published specialized catalogues and organized periodical exhibitions and public lectures. In 1939 the Union had 7 societies and 335

[19] The jubilee edition dedicated to its 75th anniversary offers an extensive review of the philatelic movement in Bulgaria, see Hristov (Hristov 1968).

members, of which two-thirds were in Sofia (Nokov 1942). The next year membership doubled, while in 1941 local societies were established for the first time in two villages. During the last congress before the Communist regime it was reported that the Union had 47 societies with 1,826 members – and almost half of them were located in the capital.

2.4.2. Organized Identity Politics

2.4.2.1. Macedonian and Thracian Bulgarians

Bulgaria surrendered significant parts of its territory to neighboring countries as a consequence of losing the Balkan Wars and the First World War. Most Bulgarians inhabiting these lands were forced to find a new home in the shrunken kingdom. The organizations of Bulgarian nationals – deprived of their property, harassed, and pressured to leave their homes – represent an important part of national history. These Bulgarians left territories surrendered to Greece, Turkey, Rumania, and Serbia, while others came from Ukrainian and Moldovan Bessarabia. Once in Bulgaria, they established independent organizations of Macedonian Bulgarians, Thracian Bulgarians, Bulgarians from Dobrudzha, Bulgarians from the Western Outlands, and Bessarabian Bulgarians. Most numerous and most popular were the organizations of Macedonian Bulgarians and Thracian Bulgarians. They were founded with the primary goal of liberating their homeland by organizing an uprising with the help of the

Bulgarian state and other governments. But they also assisted immigrants to settle and performed a range of cultural and educational functions.

Prior to 1893 there were a dozen independent Macedonian organizations, such as: Macedonian Voice (*Makedonski glas*), the Albanian–Macedonian League (*Albano-makedonska liga*), the Bulgarian–Macedonian Philanthropic Society in Ruse (*Bûlgaro-makedonsko blagotvoritelno druzhestvo v Ruse*), Society Fatherland (*Druzhestvo tatkovina*), Society St. Cyril and St. Methodius (D*ruzhestvo sv. sv. Kiril i Metodi*), and the Macedonian Craftsmen's Society in the city of Plovdiv (*Makedonsko esnafsko druzhestvo v grad Plovdiv*).[20] Their activities were mostly cultural and educational, such as publishing books and providing local Bulgarian schools and churches with study materials, fellowships, religious books, and clothes. They also issued the newspaper *Makedoniia* and the magazines *Makedonski Kalendar* and *Loza*.

The Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (*Makedonska revoliutsionna organizatsiia*) first arose in 1893 in Thessaloniki, Greece. The Internal Macedono–Odrin Revolutionary Organization (*Vûtreshna makedono-odrinska revoliutsionna organizatsiia*) was consolidated in 1896. The first Thracian society "Strandzha" was founded in Varna in 1896 and a year later, the first nationwide congress of all its branches was held in Burgas. Macedonian and Thracian organizations on the territory of Bulgaria merged in

[20] For more details on the independent Macedonian organizations before the foundation of the Internal Macedono–Odrin Revolutionary Organization see Nikolova (Nikolova 1994).

1900 to form the Supreme Macedono–Odrin Committee (*Vûrkhoven makedono-odrinski komitet*). After the suppression of the revolt in 1903 their members directed their main activities towards fundraising, charity, and the assistance of thousands of refugees who were homeless, jobless, and without much property. Their activities included issuing petitions, appeals, protest letters, newspapers, historical publications, organizing public lectures and discussions, celebrations, outings, and meetings related to important historical dates and the building of memorials – all of them with the goal to maintain the spiritual unity and solidarity between the refugees and those who remained in neighboring countries. Some societies were renamed philanthropic fraternities (*blagotvoritelni bratstva*).

In 1920 students from Macedonia at Sofia University founded the Student Society *Vardar* (*Studentsko druzhestvo Vardar*).[21] In 1925, a ladies' section was established, starting ethnographic exhibitions of clothes and objects from the region. It published brochures, books, the annual compilation *Ilinden*, and until its dissolution in 1934 it had around 390 members. In 1921, in Sofia, some members of the Internal Macedonian–Odrin Revolutionary Organization founded the Charitable Society *Ilinden* (*Blagotvoritelno druzhestvo Ilinden*) with its own newspaper *Ilinden* (Grebenarov and Mitev 2003). By the end of the year they had societies in 12 other cities. In 1923 the Macedonian fraternity from Shtip laid the foundations of the Macedonian Scientific Institute

[21] The Macedonian youth organizations are treated in detail in a special publication dedicated to them; Gotsev (Gotsev 1988).

(*Makedonski nauchen institut*), with the goal to contribute to the study of the history, ethnography, and economy of Macedonia. It started publishing the magazine *Makedonski pregled*.

The Macedonian Youth Cultural Union (*Makedonski mladezhki kulturno-prosveten sûiuz*) was founded in Sofia and Varna in 1923. While at that time only 30 societies nationwide were represented, during each of the next three years their number and membership doubled. They immediately started publishing the newspaper *Ustrem*, replaced by *Makedoniia* and the magazine *Rodina* in 1926. The same year the Macedonian Youth Union organized 47 evening and Sunday schools for 1,243 members nationwide, offered sport and tourist activities, had 22 orchestras, 30 choirs, and 26 theater groups, as well as 220 clubs with libraries, drama and movie theaters. In 1936 Macedonian students founded Student Society *Shar* (*Studentsko druzhestvo Shar*), which succeeded *Vardar*, the latter comprising of around 400 members by 1939.

During the first half of the 1930s the organizations of the Macedonian National Committee grew from 227 with 20,000 members to 237 with 22,000 members. For the same period the Macedonian youth organizations changed from 215 organizations with 19,800 members to 225 with 21,965 members. The peak of the Macedonian women's organizations was reached during 1933–34, with some 59 societies with 5,800 members, while the other Macedonian organization *Ilinden* had its peak of 44 societies with 2,396 members in 1932–33.

After the First World War, in 1918, the organized Thracian movement was revived with the constitutive congress in Karaagach, a suburb of Odrin and within the kingdom of Bulgaria at that time. The first Thracian Youth Society *Exarch Antim I* (*Mladezhko trakiĭsko druzhestvo ekzarkh Antim I*) was established in Varna in 1922 (Traikov 2003). Two years later, in 1924, 12 organizations held the first congress in Plovdiv. These societies organized celebrations of important historical events, public lectures, and discussions; they also published and distributed a newspaper and a magazine. In some university cities students from Thrace founded Thracian student societies, the first one being in Sofia in 1925. In 1933 they held the first congress of their Union. The Thracian Women's Union (*Trakiĭski zhenski sŭiuz*) was created in Varna in 1933 by 21 delegates, three years after the foundation of the first Ladies' Committee (*Damski komitet*) of the Thracian organization. The Thracian Scientific Institute (*Trakiĭski nauchen institut*) was established in 1934 following the outlawing of all organizations. Its goals were to conduct research and to present by means of scientific publications on the ethnography, economy, political situation, and struggle of Bulgarians in Thrace.

For the five-year period 1929–34 the organizations of Thracian Bulgarians increased from 205 to 260, with 18, 645 to 31,520 members respectively. During the same period the Thracian Youth Organization expanded from 61 societies with 7,420 members to 81 with 8,423 members. At the end of the 1930s the Thracian Women's Organization consisted of 11

societies with 1,500 members. The peak membership of the Union of Macedonian and Odrin Societies in Bulgaria (*Sûiuz na makedono-odrinskite druzhestva v Bûlgaria*) was reached in 1934–35 (35 societies with 2,233 members).

Thracian organizations advocated for pensions, lightening of refugee loans, providing new settlers with land and their final settlement.[22] Some of the local organizations had their own amateur groups for Thracian folk songs and dances, as well as theatrical performances. Certain groups were composed only of children or young people. Few organizations had their own buildings, clubs, and cinemas. The organization had various central (*Strandzha*, *Trakiia*, *Zavet*) and local newspapers.

2.4.2.2. Women's Societies

Bulgarian feminism started as a philanthropic and social activity, evolved to a movement for educational equality, and went through the struggles for the franchise, for access to certain professions - lawyers, civil servants – (not achieved until 1944), and for legal equality (for example testimony and inheritance).[23] Feminists funded the education of young women, delivered public lectures, wrote articles and appeals, participated in artistic performances,

[22] A concise and systematic history of Thracian organizations, as well as data about membership, is offered in the publications of one of its leaders (Filchev 1999; 2007).

[23] Vodenicharova and Popova (Vodenicharova and Popova 1957) and Daskalova (Daskalova 2005) provide comprehensive overviews of feminist movements in Bulgaria.

and maintained intensive international contacts. They ardently fought to rewrite "the social contract among brothers". Following pressure from Bulgarian feminists women were, for the first time, allowed to take part in school board elections in 1909. The same year the law prohibiting female teachers to work once they married was abolished. In 1937, women were allowed to vote in local elections, but only if they were married, widowed, or divorced – which again made them dependent on men. Women's right activists ultimately succeeded in changing this in 1941.

The first women's society was established in the town of Lom in 1857. Until 1878 the number of cultural, educational, and charitable societies reached 61 with a membership of around 6,000. The most important organization – the Bulgarian Women's Union (BWU) (*Bûlgarski Zhenski Sûiuz*) was established in 1901 by 27 local organizations as a reaction to educational discrimination. The Women's Union published *Women's Voice*. Within the Union, socialist ideas prevailed, but with time differences amongst members resulted in the rise of a dominant fraction not interested in class struggle. Thus, the socialists left the organization in 1903. The Union had 76 societies with 7,704 members in 1930; and 131 societies with 12,342 members in 1940. Nevertheless, during 1934 – a census year – membership represented less than 1% of Bulgarian women of legal age.

Another organization, the "Equal Rights" Union or the Union of Progressive Women (*Sûiuz "Ravnopravie"/Sûiuz na naprednichavite zheni*)

was born in 1909. Its appearance was triggered by the suffragette movement in Western Europe and was created by Anna Karima, the first chairperson of the BWU. It fought mainly for women's equal rights during elections and published the magazine *Equal Rights*. By analogy with the West, women socialists were frequently wives, sisters, and friends of male socialist leaders. They criticized those feminists who did not share the idea of merging *les querelles des femmes* with the class struggle, by blaming them for separatism. In 1914 the Socialist Women's Union (*Sotsialisticheski zhenski sûiuz*) appeared. In 1921 a Women's Social Democratic Union (*Zhenski sotsialdemokraticheski sûiuz*) was founded and started publishing the newspaper *Bliss*. The latter's idea for change did not envisage, like communist feminists, the building of a new society from *tabula rasa*, rather they wanted to preserve the positive elements of the status quo whilst challenging income inequality and advocating social welfarism. In 1922 they had 22 local groups with around 1,000 members.

The Society of Bulgarian Women with Higher Education (*Druzhestvo na bûlgarkite s visshe obrazovanie*) was founded in 1924, and soon became a member of the International Federation of University Women. It united several hundred women in three sections – lawyers, artists, and writers; but its members also included doctors and teachers. It fought for the professional access of women into the labour-market. Some 15% of them were educated abroad; most knew foreign languages and maintained contacts with foreign

feminists. The legal field witnessed much activism – as Bulgaria and Albania were the only Balkan countries that did not allow women to practice law until as late as 1944. The Bulgarian Women's Union "Fatherland Love" (*Bûlgarski zhenski sûiuz "Liubov kûm Rodinata"*) was a right-wing feminist organization which appeared in 1926 as an affiliate of the respective male patriotic organization. Its goals were to nurture love towards national values and profound religious sentiments and to fight against foreign influences. In 1939 it had 12 branches with 1,868 members nationwide.

Minorities formed their own organizations as well. The Albanian Women's Society (*Albansko zhensko druzhestvo "Albanka"*) had 34 members in 1933, while in 1938 the Women's International Zionist Organization (*Vsesvetska zhenska tsionisticheska organizatsiia*) had 23 societies with 1,900 members. In 1939 the Women's Youth Christian Society (*Zhensko mladezhko khristiiansko druzhestvo*) had its peak membership at 706 members, while in 1938 the Union of Women-Members of Cooperatives in Bulgaria (*Sûiuz na kooperatorkite v Bûlgaria*) comprised 33 societies with 2,600 members. Other organizations included the Club of Bulgarian Female Writers (*Klub na bûlgarskite pisatelki*), the Bulgarian section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (*Bûlgarskata sektsiia na mezhdunarodnata liga za mir i svoboda*), and the Women's Union Dobrudzha (*Dobrudzhanski zhenski sûiuz*).

2.4.2.3. Temperance Movement

The religiously-affiliated ideas of the temperance movement found a warm welcome very early on in Bulgaria.[24] Their pioneers were evangelist missionaries from America, and Dr. Clarke's family established the Evangelist Temperance Union (*Evangelistki vûzdûrzhatelen sûiuz*) in 1873. They preached self-restraint and abstention from alcohol, tobacco, gambling, and promoted sexual continence.

In 1919 Khristo Dimchev founded the Pupil's Neutral Temperance Union (*Uchenicheski neutralen vûzdûrzhatelen sûiuz*) in the city of Sliven and started publishing the magazine *Trezvenost i vûzdarzhanie*. The next year representatives from 13 organizations attended its first congress and until 1927 its members amounted to around 6,000. In 1927 the Union was dissolved and only the local organizations were reestablished in 1932. At the same time other temperance associations multiplied: the Women's Christian Temperance Society (*Zhensko hristiiansko vûzdûrzhatelno druzhestvo*) established in 1919; the Student Temperance Society (*Studentsko vûzdûrzhatelno druzhestvo*) in 1922; the Teachers' Neutral Temperance Union (*Uchitelski neutralen vûzdûrzhatelen sûiuz*) in 1922; the Railroad Temperance Union (*Zheleznicharski vûzdûrzhatelen sûiuz*) in 1922; the Physicians' Temperance Union (*Lekarski vûzdûrzhatelen sûiuz*) in 1923; the Youth Neutral Temperance

[24] The data about the temperance movement is compiled from the Bulgarian Statistical Yearbook (1910-1946), *Za vsenarodna trezvenost* (1966) and Burilkov (Burilkov 1934).

Union (*Mladezhki neutralen vûzdûrzhatelen sûiuz*) in 1924; and, the Bulgarian Civic Neutral Temperance Union (*Bûlgarski grazhdanski neutralen vûzdûrzhatelen sûiuz*) in 1926. Some of them were united in the Bulgarian Federation of Abstainers (*Bûlgarska vûzdûrzhatelna federatsiia*), which comprised some 500 societies and around 20,000 members.

The membership of the Student Temperance Society only grew from 40 in 1922–23 to 362 in 1928–29. The Union Fighting Alcoholism in Bulgaria (*Sûiuz za borba s alkokholizma v Bûlgariia*) which was associated with the International Organization of Good Templars increased its members from 383 in 1933–34 to 833 members in 1937–38. In five years the Bulgarian Federation of Abstainers grew from 7 societies with 18 members per 10,000 inhabitants (10,500 members) in 1932 to 445 societies and 9 unions with 27 members per 10,000 inhabitants (16,800 members) in 1937.

2.4.2.4. The Disabled

The associational history of the disabled is long and tough, because of their difficulty in gaining societal recognition and obtaining benefits from a hostile state bureaucracy.[25] The disabled constantly attempted to achieve increases in their pensions, access to preferential mortgages, fiscal relief, transport discounts, subsidized prosthetic items, and free schooling for their children. Some of their accomplishments were the building of the Bankia

[25] On the organizational history of the disabled in Bulgaria see Georgiev (Georgiev 2001) and Atanasov and Kostadinov (Atanasov and Kostadinov 2003).

sanatorium in 1927 and the Home-Monument of the Disabled (*Sûiuzen dom-pametnik na invalidite*), which was completed in 1947 (the idea for which was taken from the *Hôtel des Invalides* in Paris in 1936, but the work did not start until 1941).

In 1913 a 27-year disabled man founded the first society, Disabled (*Invalid*), which adopted a politically neutral statute and established its own newspaper, *Pravda* (later – *Invalid*). By the end of the year, 20 more societies appeared throughout the country and the Union of the Disabled (*Sûiuz na invalidite*) was founded in 1915. In 1918 there were 82 societies with 2,500 members who decided to form in a national union under the auspices of the state. The State Union of the Disabled consisted of 230 local organizations with 29,549 members in 1921, while in 1933 it was up to 326 societies and 54,443 members.

The Union of the War Handicapped in Bulgaria (*Sûiuz na voennoinvalidite v Bûlgaria*) ranged from having 15,738 members, organized in 258 societies in 1929–30 to 40,250 and 323 societies in 1934; its successor, the General Union of the War Victims in Bulgaria (*Obsht sûiuz na postradalite ot voinite v Bûlgaria*), varied from having 31,281 members, organized in 149 societies in 1935 to 46,129 and 234 societies in 1939.

The narrative story of associations of and for the blind is also one of a wide variety of separate organizations that only became united in the

Communist period (Sotirov 2002; 2004). Established in 1914 the Society of the Blind Esperantists (*Druzhestvo na slepite esperantisti)* was the first attempt to organize the Bulgarian blind; it was a section of the Bulgarian Esperanto Union (*Bûlgarski esperantski sûiuz)*. The next year the society was dismantled and was reestablished 10 years later under the name Balkana Stello (*Balkana Stelo*). At this time Esperanto was considered a means of communication among blind from other countries. In 1921 blind war veterans from the General Union of Handicapped, Orphans, and Widows (*Obsht sûiuz na invalidi, siratsi i vdovitsi*) formed the Society of the Bulgarian Blind from the Wars "Darkness" (*Druzhestvo na oslepelite ot voinite Tûmnina*). The organization published its own magazine *Tûmnina* and had over 100 members in the second half the 1930s. The Society of the Bulgarian Blind was established in 1920 by alumni of the State Institute for the Blind (*Dûrzhaven institut za slepi*), a specialized school for general and professional education since 1905. Its priorities were the establishment of a library, a professional orchestra, and charitable activities for fundraising. It had 132 members in 1930–31 and by 1939 had united three local societies with 1,140 members.

The Society for Patronage of the Blind in Bulgaria (*Druzhestvo za pokrovitelstvo na slepelite v Bûlgaria*) was founded in 1922. Its goal was to inform the public about the problems of the blind and to seek ways to solve them. Its members were philanthropists who were not blind themselves, but were involved with working for the blind. Its peak year was 1930–31 when it

had 222 members, while its lowest membership level was recorded in 1936 with only 55 members. Its periodicals were the magazines *Sûdba* and *Vestitel*. In 1928 a *chitalishte* was founded with the goal of building a library, reading room, and a cinema. Two years later it possessed 500 volumes, 70 of which were in Braille.

Gloom – the Charitable Society of the Blind from Industrial Accidents in Bulgaria (*Blagotvoritelno druzhestvo Mrak na oslepelite ot zlopoluka ot proizvodstvo v Bûlgaria*) was founded in 1930 with a membership of 20. All members were insured and received pensions. Their publication was the magazine *Uteha*. "Somber Look" (*Cheren pogled*) was an organization founded in 1932 and included blind persons expelled from other organizations. For comparison, in 1934 Bulgaria had 4,800 blind, so it is apparent that only a quarter of them were organized nationwide.

The organizational history of the deaf is similar to that of the blind. The Society for the Protection of the Deaf-Mute in Bulgaria (*Druzhestvo za zakrila na glukhonemite v Bûlgaria*) was established in 1934 by professor doctor Belinov and 42 other hearing public figures.[26] Their goal was to acquaint the public with the problems of the deaf and non-speaking and to assist them to better integrate into society. They opened a home for the elderly deaf and a

[26] An historical perspective on the associational life of the Bulgarian deaf is the focus of the 70th anniversary jubilee publication (Panev, Gancheva, and Mosheva 2004). The names used are the original names of the associations. These names have changed over time as the term "deaf-mute" was replaced by "deaf."

furniture workshop. Later the same year, alumni of the State Institute for Deaf-Mutes (*Dûrzhaven institut za glukhonemi*) that had been created in 1906, established the Society of the Deaf-Mute in Bulgaria (*Druzhestvo na glukhonemite v Bûlgaria*). It had 129 members in 1935 and 200 in 1939, while the Society for the Protection of the Deaf-Mute in Bulgaria increased its membership from 47 to 84 over the same period (there were 6,613 deaf-mute in 1934). Until 1944 the state provided no subsidies or grants and all the revenue came from membership fees, charity, activities, and publications. The first issue of the newspaper *Bez slukh i govor* published by the Society of the Deaf-Mute in Bulgaria appeared in 1939. Until 1944 the Society of the Deaf-Mute in Bulgaria held 8 annual congresses, but it had no other regional and local organizations throughout the country. The deaf organized theater, pantomime, ballet and dance performances, and recitals of poems and songs by signs and mimics. They participated in film festivals, photo, painting, and sculpture exhibitions. They had representatives in national and international sport events for the deaf and particularly in sports like chess, soccer, wrestling, gymnastics, and tourism.

2.5. Conclusion

It has been demonstrated that Bulgaria has undoubtedly enjoyed a vigorous associational life. A range of organizations, such as the Red Cross, those organizing leisure activities, the temperance movement, and those representing citizens with disabilities have existed in Bulgaria, as in other

countries. In addition, a particularly important Bulgarian organization, *chitalishte*, has played a major role in organizing active civic life. These findings contradict the common description in the literature of Bulgaria as having only weak traditions of civil society and social capital. A typical shortcoming of the works that come to such conclusions is their short-term time frame, which is usually the last 10 or 15 years. To overcome this deficiency, a past period – from the appearance of the modern Bulgarian state in 1878 until the beginning of the Communist regime in 1944 was considered. In addition, for the first time in the Bulgarian and English literatures, a unique overall view of Bulgarian associational history was reconstructed on the basis of organizational statistics, memoirs, as well as author's interviews with activists and leaders. The new findings also show that during periods of restricted political life, the tendency to associate might be high. This can be noticed particularly after the ban of the political parties in Bulgaria in 1934.

Some of the forms of social capital and civil society in the ex-Communist countries of Eastern Europe have not been sufficiently explored and not even reported, but these lacunae do not constitute evidence to support a thesis that associational culture did not enjoy considerable presence in the region across the modern period. The original data compiled in this study and the new results reported introduce certain corrections to the claim that some societies possess superior propensity for spontaneous sociability while others, such as Bulgaria, are lacking in such forms of social capital and civil society.

At least these findings will require some revision of some existing interpretations. The present research opens avenues for future comparative investigations into the forms of social capital and civil society in other Eastern European countries and a search for similarities and differences with their Western European counterparts – thus theory will be undoubtedly refined and enriched.

CHAPTER 3

BORROWING OF IDEAS ABOUT INSTITUTIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL:

EUROPEAN GENESIS OF THE BULGARIAN CHITALISHTE

3.1. Introduction

Social capital as proclivity to associate in the name of the common good finds its expression in voluntary organizations. The idea about these civil society organizations can appear spontaneously or can be emulated. But it is rare when members and organizers explicitly recognize the borrowing instead of presenting it as an original one. However, discerning such a link suggests a clue about the continuity and commonalities of international social processes. Travelling of ideas resembles closely borrowing of social policies. Therefore, theories about public policy transfer may provide a conceptual framework for the correct analysis of such processes and structures.

Bulgarian history has always claimed that the birth of the most important cultural institution in the country – the chitalishte – has been a product of a unique idea, not to be found elsewhere in the world. Yet, it was surmised that such a collective perception has been created, since the institution was directly implied in the creation of the modern nation and state. Exiguous and fragmented pieces of evidence from various sources may lead to the conjecture that this is partially true. National activists often mention foreign examples either from neighboring Balkan or from West European countries. From its inception chitalishte appeared as an adaptation of foreign experience to Bulgarian reality. However, with time, it combined the functions of different model institutions it emulated from abroad. Ultimately, chitalishte turned out to

be unique not only because of its essence, but also because of the dominant place it occupied and still occupies within the cultural heritage of the nation.

Thus, expectations for the findings are twofold – firstly, to prove that in general policy transfer theories are valid when performing a historical dissection of an institution of social capital, and secondly, to demonstrate that the origins of the Bulgarian chitalishte are part and parcel of the processes of Enlightenment and nation-building in Europe. The answers will be elucidated after presenting the mainstream theories about policy transfer, then - the essential features of chitalishte, and finally, by interpreting, in the light of the theories already discussed, the testimonials about it.

3.2. Panopticon of Theories on Borrowing of Ideas

Nations have always sought to borrow and adapt structures from other societies. Borrowing of ideas about social institutions resembles the process of borrowing social policies. Such phenomena are analyzed by rational choice theories which provide the framework and the tools for their better understanding. Their concepts, vastly proliferating, are very close in meaning and are distinguished according to what the accent is put on. This section will present in a consecutive manner four important views on borrowing of public policies, namely lesson-drawing, diffusion, transfer, and convergence. The latter follow one after the other in a chronological order, i.e. according to the

time of their appearance. Before exposing the theories themselves, it would be worth to specify ***what*** is expected to be transferred and ***who*** does it.

Dolowitz and Marsh (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000) consider their common denominator the knowledge about institutions and ideas in one setting which is used in another setting. Page insists that the process is not any trade of ideas, but the transposition takes place after the latter is already put into practice, and sometimes reexported (Page 2000). Both lesson-drawing and transfer could be an outcome of social learning-cognition and redefinition of interests on the basis of new knowledge affecting fundamental beliefs and ideas (Hall 1993). Dolowitz and Marsh (Dolowitz and Marsh 1996), and Dolowitz (Dolowitz 2000) emphasize especially the question what is transferred and point out among the six choices institutions; ideology; ideas, attitudes and concepts. The latter figure out among Stone's five objects of transfer (Stone 1999). Dolowitz and Marsh (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000) call the participants borrowers and lenders, quoting Robertson (Robertson 1991). At the same time Stone (Stone 2000) and Page (Page 2000) refer to them as exporters and importers. McAdam and Rucht use the terms emitters/transmitters and adopters (McAdam and Rucht 1993). According to Stone (Stone 1999) and Page (Page 2000) these agents of transfer include not only organizations (non-state, voluntary ones as well), but also networks and individuals (some of them being the individual academic entrepreneurs). "Third sector organizations may have a greater

capacity to engage in experimentation, flag new ideas and engage in policy trials independently of the state" (Stone 2000, 19).

Rose (Rose 1991) defines lesson as a knowledge and an action-oriented conclusion drawn from observation or experience. What stimulates the search for lessons is dissatisfaction, some of its causes being the uncertainty of the environment and value change (Rose 1991; Rose 1993). Robertson and Waltman point out that it was Thompson (Thompson 1967) the first who regarded the perception of the organization's unsatisfactory performance as driven by uncertainty or by conflict, or both (Robertson and Waltman 1993). Dissatisfaction within an organization evokes a subsequent search first, in its own past, in other words time, and second, across space (Rose 1991; Dolowitz and Marsh 1996). This also can be formulated as lesson-drawing from two types of experience: its own organizational knowledge and the experience of the others (Rose 1993). A third possibility is the combination of the two – learning from experience back in time and away in space (Rose 1993). According to Rose (Rose 1991; Rose 1993) there exist five alternative ways of drawing a lesson which can be presented on a continuum from closely resembling the original to being unique and incomparable elsewhere. This scale also corresponds to the easiness of the process of lesson-drawing. The simplest way is copying from a blueprint by preserving institutions unchanged. When the original is improved by emulation, cultural, historical and other contextual variables are considered. The latter two ways involve borrowing ideas from one

source. When the sources become two and more, then the process is called hybridization and synthesis, the first one involving two and the latter - more than two sources. The ultimate and the most distant from the original way of producing an innovation is the inspiration. As a matter of fact this 5-way distinction of drawing a lesson is rather relative than absolute, because hybridization could be also a combination of more than two elements, as well as synthesis could be a combination of exactly two components. Dolowitz and Marsh (Dolowitz and Marsh 1996; Dolowitz 2000) combine these two and call them mixtures, regarding them as the third degree of transfer. In fact in real life at a certain point of time the lesson-drawing could be an emulation and later it could turn out to be an inspiration. The explicit recognition of borrowing, copying and emulation is not something to which those emulating will readily confess. (Bennett 1991). During the search for a lesson the following three factors are taken into consideration: similarity of economic resources, the geographical propinquity, and the ideological resemblance (Rose 1991; Rose 1993). Others term them comparability of the bureaucratic size and efficiency, technological abilities, ideological similarities (Dolowitz and Marsh 1996). Robertson and Waltman (Robertson and Waltman 1993) explain that "emulation is likely to occur between geographically contiguous nations, between economic rivals, and between nations with deep cultural bonds". In certain cases some nations can play the role of nations-exemplars (trend-setters), that is, their name would be enough to justify a lesson-drawing notwithstanding the practicality of the subsequent application of their model.

Such desirable, but not practical solutions might lead to what Rose terms “siren call” (Rose 1991; 1993).

Diffusion is introduced as the acceptance of an item (information, skills) by adopters from emitters through channels of communication (McAdam and Rucht 1993). The agents of diffusion can be a person or an organization, but diffusion takes place only when a minimal identification of the adopter with the emitter is present. Diffusion occurs when an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system. It is a kind of communication, where a new idea is in the center of the messages (Rogers 1983). The information is exchanged by the means of two types of channels – mass media and interpersonal ones (Rogers 1983). Those two types are termed respectively non-relational and relational one, but in all instances the processes of diffusion make use of a mix of those two (McAdam and Rucht 1993). Usually the communication is more effective, if the entities are homophilous, i.e. belong to the same social category (Strang and Meyer, 1993). Diffusions proceed in waves – they tend to spread first throughout the region where the innovation originated and then to other regions; also they follow an S-shaped curve with most adoptions in the beginning and then waning (Weyland 2005). One has to distinguish between lesson-drawing and diffusion, according to Rose (Rose 1991). The first presupposes voluntarism, while the second one – technocratic determinism. The latter is also focused on the attribute of the adopters and the pattern of the process, but not with its content.

For Dolowitz and Marsh (Dolowitz and Marsh 1996) transfer can be voluntary, direct coercive (by supra-national institution, a policy-pusher) and indirect coercive (externalities such as technology, the world economy, the actors' perception, an international consensus). In their further research these authors even claim that very often the transfer (seldom a completely rational or voluntary process) includes coercive, as well as voluntary elements at the same time (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000). Presenting coercive and voluntary transfer as two extremities or ideal-types can serve only as a heuristic device (Dolowitz 2000). Lesson-drawing is a voluntary type of transfer, therefore in this respect it is a narrower notion than transfer (Stone 1999). But if the lesson is negative, there might not be a subsequent transfer; hence in that respect it is the broader category (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996). The latter study also assumes that the actors are to be found inside and outside the government.

Convergence is a set of processes that shape social structures in the same mold; it is a movement from different positions to a common point (Bennett 1991). Long time ago ideas permeated across borders and convergence took place via processes associated with modernization thus homogenizing societies (Drezner 2001). Diffusion constitutes the third class of convergence mechanisms (co-operative harmonization and coercive imposition being the first two) and it takes place in the absence of any obligations (Busch-Jörgens 2005). Also, it is not the same as policy transfer, because the latter can be one of the causes (the other being harmonization, elite network and penetration) for

convergence (Stone 2000) One of the four processes through which convergence might arise is emulation. Emulation is not a diffusion, the latter understood either as a pattern of successive adoption of an innovation (Stone 2000), or as imitation and copying. The first step in emulation is the utilization of evidence, and then, the second one is the drawing of a lesson from that experience (Bennett 1991).

In order to grasp better why concepts from public policy transfer are useful for the analysis of the appearance of Bulgarian chitalishte, it would be crucial to understand firstly the essence of this cultural institution, so important for the foundation of the modern Bulgarian nation and culture. The next section will be extremely dedicated to chitalishte – its precursors, pattern of appearance and criteria for recognition - statute, code of rules, types of memberships, governing body, and activity. Enumerating the underlying principles and goals will confirm its link with the processes of national liberation and education. Further, the important issue about its premises and sources of financing will be touched. Chitalishe's maturity and development will be demonstrated by the creation of a national network and a legal framework, as well as by the interactions with other institutions. The section will end up with summarizing its major functions.

3.3. West European Precursors

3.3.1. The Francophony

The *cabinet de lecture* in France was a place to meet and socialize, but its owner (*loueur de livres*) was always lending books and periodicals to the public for money. The renting tariffs were per session, per day, month, and year and per volume (Pain, 1828). The English called it *reading room*. The French had different names for it as well - *cabinet d'étude, cabinet littéraire, salon de conférences pour les étudiants, salon littéraire, cercle littéraire, cercle encyclopédique, café* (Pain, 1828; Tirol, 1926). A letter in 1714 talks about renting French and foreign newspapers in Paris and in 1761 the bookstore Quillau opened the first *cabinet de lecture* (Fustier 1883). In 1820 their number in Paris only was 32, their peak – 215 – was reached in 1844, in 1860 they diminished to 183, and in 1853 there were 118 of them (Fustier 1883; Pichois 1959). From the last number 34 were owned by women. Most of the *cabinets de lecture* were located near Palais-Royal. The appearance and the success of the *cabinet de lecture* are attributed to the high price of reading materials and the lack of public libraries at the same time, as well as the rise in literacy and the emergence of the novel as a serious literary genre (Whitmore 1978). The majority of the customers were coming from the petty bourgeoisie (Pichois 1959). The readers were university students, would-be authors, professionals, military officers, usually those, who could not buy books. They also served the needs of serious readers, thus sometimes complementing the research libraries,

given the shortage of the modern public libraries (Whitmore 1978). Newspapers (no less than 30) were in French, English, German, Hungarian, Italian, Spanish, and Russian. Novels were far more important than books of history, philosophy, or religion (Brisset 1843; Pichois 1959). Most rented books were easy readings, but one could find novels by de Staël, Walter Scott, Cooper, Goethe, Dumas, Hugo, Flaubert, and Daudet. Because of their growing influence, the government tried to control them by licenses (*patentes*) and censorship. During the First Empire (1804-1814) and the Restoration (1814-1830) the *cabinets de lecture* became object of strict surveillance by the authorities, since they were repositories of periodicals representing non-conformist political views. They were suspected of being a gathering place for liberal opponents of the regime (Whitmore 1978). Some works by Rousseau, Diderot, Voltaire, and Montesquieu were forbidden and nevertheless were being rented. Certain *cabinets de lecture* were specialized, for example in law, medicine, theology, history, for Americans, for theater fans. At the foreign ones, for example the Polish one, founded in 1876 and the Russian one – in 1874, politics dominated literature (Fustier 1883). A provincial *cabinet de lecture* usually tried to achieve breadth in its collection, while in Paris, due to its unique culture, a similar one tended to develop a specialty (Whitmore 1978). The decline and the end of the *cabinet de lecture* was due to 2 reasons: 1. the appearance of the Belgian counterfeit books, and 2. the serial novels (*roman-feuilleton*) published in newspapers – the first one appeared in *La Presse* in 1836 (Pichois 1959). Whitmore states two more – the drastic diminishing the

cost of printing and the change in literary taste (Whitmore 1978). The *cabinet de lecture* should not be confused with the *salon littéraire*, a meeting of men and women who gather together on a regular basis in an intellectual environment in order to discuss the major events of time, philosophy, literature, moral issues. Before Louis XIV such gatherings were called *cénacles*, *groupes littéraires* and the most famous one was Malherbe's. These participants belonged to the "polite society" and they developed the habit of chatting which later gave birth to the art of conversation, so typical of the French society. Almost always they were presided by a lady, the first one being Catherine de Rambouillet in 1608. The second one, established in 1629 by Conrart was the predecessor of the *Académie française*. In the 18th century baron Holbach's salon attracted Diderot, Helvetius, Grimm and in the 19th century Hugo, Lamartine, de Musset, Dumas, Balzac, Delacroix, Liszt were frequent visitors of Charles Nodier's one.

3.3.2. The Germanic Space

Reading societies (generally known as *Lesegesellschaften*) in German-speaking Europe played a special role in the modernization processes during the *Aufklärung* (the Enlightenment). They were one type of the vehicles of the structural transformation of the public sphere, their predecessors being the *Tischschaften* (learned societies), the *Sprachgesellschaften* (literary societies), and *Gottshed's Deutsche Gesellschaften* (Habermas 1989). Other types of associations were the freemasonry, learned and literary societies, patriotic and

public-spirited societies (Göpfert 1976; Dülmen 1992). One of the reasons of their appearance is the exploding book market and trade in the 18th century. Another reason was purely economical – at a time when libraries were missing, eager readers had to join resources. But consequently, the main motive became the need of sociability and of practical knowledge, thus breaking the boundaries between estates, between the nobles and the fledgling bourgeoisie (Kieser 1998). Using their evolution as a criterion, some authors (Prüsener 1972; Dülmen 1992) classify reading societies into three types: *Lesezirkel* **(**Reading Circle), *Lesebibliotheken* (Reading Library), and *Lesekabinett* **(**Reading Cabinet). The first ones grouped people who had joint subscription to a journal, who would meet in a private home. The second ones were mainly local libraries, organized by book dealers, while the last one already included all characteristics of a voluntary organization. Reading clubs had manifold names and labels: *Leseinstitut, Klub, Societät, Ressource, Harmonie* (Stützel-Prüsener 1981), as well as *Lesezimmer, Lesekonvent, Lese- und Erholungsgesellschaft* (Dülmen 1992). The earliest known reading club – *Berliner Journalgesellschaft* - was founded in Berlin in 1764, although a *Gemeinschaftabonnement* (joint subscription) has been reported in Hildesheim as early as 1606 (Milstein 1972). 430 such societies were found by 1800 (Dann 1982; Kieser 1998). According to most conservative estimates, their membership varied between 15 and 20 thousand, yet compared to the literate population, this number was small (Dülmen 1992; Kieser 1998). In Switzerland apart from the *Lesegesellschaft, Lesezirkel, Leseverein* there existed *Kasino, Lesestube,*

Bibliothekslesegesellschaft, Museumlesegesellschaft, *Volksleseverein, Zeitungsleseverein* (Eberle 1999). In fact the earliest reading society of that type appeared not in Germany, but in Switzerland – in 1733 clerics established a library in Glarus which was opened to the public in 1744 (Milstein 1972). Reading societies in Vienna, Austria, known as *Leseverein* (Reading Association) and *Lesehalle* (Reading Hall), appeared much later, mainly in the 19th century, because of the resistance of the baroque Catholicism and were associated with student radical thought and movements (McGrath 1967). Their members were the composer Gustav Mahler, the historian Heinrich Friedjun, the psychiatrist Sigmund Freud, the sociologist Heinrich Braun and the founder of the Austrian Socialist Party and the first Austrian republic Gustav Mahler. The reading societies had written statutes, which were similar, since they copied it from each other. The highest authority was the general meeting where all members enjoyed equal rights. The latter took turns to participate in a committee, elected chairman, secretary, and a treasurer, some hired a librarian. Membership and participation was always voluntary, although the doors were opened only to those with intellectual or financial credentials (Dülmen 1992). Thus democratic behavior was cultivated and practiced on a local level within a feudal state. Books and periodicals provided by the societies were catalogued. Important events in the life of a reading society were the monthly lectures on topics like sciences, morality, religion, the national economy, agriculture. Since often discussions ended with a political dispute, politics was banned as a topic during the meetings. Even the state suspected societies of spreading

revolutionary ideas and consequently, censored and disbanded some of them. (Stützel-Prüsener 1981). The reading societies contributed extensively to the creation of the political consciousness of the middle class during its emancipation. After the turn of the century German reading societies ceased to exist or were transformed into other types (Dann 1982; Kieser 1998). Nevertheless, as of today some existing reading societies in Switzerland still discuss political initiatives and referendums (Eberle 1999).

3.3.3. The Anglo-Saxon World

Public libraries appeared in Britain as long as wealthy individuals started bequeathing their own personal collections, motivated by philanthropy towards the less favored sections of the community. Thus in 1422 under Richard Whittington's will, a library for free use by the citizens was established in London (Kelly 1966a; Murison 1971). The first library providing unlimited access to the general public was established in the Free Grammar School Coventry in 1601, probably by Philemon Holland. The latter was followed by the city libraries in Norwich in 1608 and Bristol in 1615, the parochial library at Langley Marish, Buckinghamshire in 1623, and the famous Chetham library in Manchester in 1653 – the only library with a continuous history since its foundation - to name a few (Greenwood 1894; Minto 1932; McColvin 1961). In 1699 Rev. James Kirkwood proposed an ambitious project to the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland to found and maintain a library in every parish and as a result 77 parochial, presbyterial, and synodical libraries

appeared. At the same time in England Dr. Thomas Bray put forward a plan to set up similar libraries for the clergy. By his death in 1730 about 60 libraries were founded and later, hundred others were established by a society bearing his name (Ogle 1897; Kelly 1966b; Murison 1971). The most successful kind of library founded prior to the rate-supported public library was the public subscription library. The earliest recorded circulating library in Scotland was the one started by the Edinburgh poet Allan Ramsay in 1725. Many of these subscription libraries in the larger towns were founded under the names of Lyceum or Athenaeum: London – around 1750, Birmingham – 1757, Liverpool – 1758, Leeds – 1768, Bristol – 1772 (Minto 1932). In 1817 Provost Samuel Brown initiated a system of 50 itinerating libraries in East Lothian with a minimum of 50 volumes which exchanged stock every 2 years. This system of circulating libraries contained about one-half to two-third religious books, the remainder being books of science and history. Usually teachers and shopkeepers volunteered to be librarians (Ogle 1897; Minto 1932). The first municipal rate-supported library in the UK was opened in 1847 in Canterbury, followed by one in Warrington the next year, and in Salford in 1850. The Public Libraries Act was adopted in 1850 as a result of a report by Edward Edwards and of the efforts of two Members, William Ewart and Joseph Brotherton. The initiative for the public-library movement did not come from the population which was hostile or, at the best, apathetic. It was the upper strata of the society who were more concerned with its effects to counter drinking, gambling and to provide religious instruction and moral uplift, rather

than its benefits for education and recreation. Nevertheless, not all upper classes were in favor – employers thought that enlightening the workers might lead them to protests and unrest (Murison 1971). The Saturday lectures of George Birkbeck to Glasgow mechanics in 1800 led to the appearance of the first mechanics' institute with its own library in UK in 1823. The mechanics from Edinburgh, Liverpool, and London followed suit. These institutions spread out very rapidly, reaching 400 in 1849, and some 700 by 1863. Their members paid a fee for using the library, which although small, was an important deterrent to the working class. That is why mechanics were reticent towards the idea of free public libraries. But as soon as rate-supported libraries began to be established, libraries of the mechanics' institutes became nucleus of the public library stock (Greenwood 1894; Ogle 1897; Minto 1932). The name of the multi-millionaire and benefactor Andrew Carnegie is associated with the expansion of the public library in the rural areas. He became popular with the practice of providing the building for the library as a gift on the condition that the municipality would guarantee an annual expenditure equivalent to a tenth of the original cost. Thus by the end of 1925 his gifts had ensured the commencement of more than 80 county libraries in Britain (McColvin 1961; Murison 1971). Thomas Kelly offers a useful nomenclature of public libraries (Kelly 1966a; 1966b). For him a public library is freely accessible to the public, without charge. Rate-aided (local) and national libraries (the British Museum, founded in 1753) of modern times are classified as public also in the sense of being maintained by public funding. In this case most of the older libraries would fail to qualify as really

public. These could be grouped into three broad categories – institutional, endowed and subscription. The institutional library dominated during the Middle Ages until the Reformation, the endowed one – from 1550 to 1750, and the subscription one – from 1750 to 1800, each type once established, continuing to exist. Institutional libraries are created and maintained from the revenue of the respective establishments - monasteries, cathedrals, universities, and later – mechanics' institutes, and literary and philosophic societies. Endowed libraries are founded and in some cases maintained as well by the donation of an individual or a group of individuals. They are placed under the control of the parochial authorities and very often they are parochial libraries. One has to distinguish here parish libraries from parochial libraries, the latter designed for the use of the inhabitants of the parish, although sometimes these categories might overlap. Other endowed libraries might be independent, scholastic, municipal, or municipal and parochial at the same time. Bray libraries, if they were not lending, should be classified as parochial. Subscription libraries are all libraries of which the costs are met by the subscription of the users. Three main subtypes could be distinguished. The first one are the private subscription libraries, or the literary societies, or the library societies which could be proprietary – each user purchases a share in the property in addition to the annual subscription and non-proprietary – relying on annual subscriptions only. The second one are the book clubs, or the book societies, or the reading societies, which always manifested strong social element and whose books were disposed after being read. The last one are the

circulating libraries conducted for profit. Hybrid forms existed at all times – a library might have been created by endowment and maintained by subscription, or created by an institution and maintained by endowment. For example, the subsidized libraries for the working class, sometimes called philanthropic libraries, operate on the basis of a nominal subscription by the users, but the main cost is borne by the contributions of the benefactors.

The history of the American public library movement began in Boston - since 1820 the mechanics and mercantile libraries were opened for their members, the lyceum movement sponsored its own social libraries, YMCA provided libraries for general use. Actually the First Boston Public Library was opened in 1655, following the donation by Captain Keayne and it served the town for almost a century, despite the fact that most of the material had religious emphasis (Shera 1949). The idea for a tax-supported public library was set forth in 1826 by George Ticknor, a Harvard professor, but the project never got beyond the planning stage (Williams 1988). In 1841 the famous French ventriloquist Nicholas Marie Alexandre Vattemare acquainted Bostonians with his idea that the world great cities should exchange books and works of art (Ditzion 1947). Finally, the Boston public library opened its doors in 1854. By 1877 it had 6 branches and more than 300,000 volumes, thus being the largest and the most used one among the 188 in the country. The public library had several predecessors (Bostwick 1910; Rose 1954). The earliest ones were the parish libraries, the first one sent from England to New York by

Thomas Bray in 1698. The second type were the subscription libraries (association, society, mechanics, mercantile, social). The earliest one was established in Philadelphia in 1731 by Benjamin Franklin and the debating society "The Junto" – a club of 50 young intellectuals who pooled their holdings (Du Mont 1977). The idea about the social library came from England. It was a voluntary institution of individuals who contributed money toward a common fund to be used for the purchase of books. Social libraries were either proprietary libraries (common-law partnerships) or association libraries (common-law corporations). Their life was relatively short – only several survived their founders. With few members - between 25 and 50 - and low entrance fees and annual dues social libraries were financially vulnerable. This reason and the advent of the public library were chiefly responsible for their decline in the middle of the 19th century (Shera 1949). The circulating library, similar to the rental library that appeared later, was a commercial enterprise for generating profit either from rental fees or from memberships. The first venture was promoted by William Rind of Annapolis, Maryland in 1762 (Du Mont 1977). The early affinity between the bookstore and the circulating library was a natural relationship. For example, the Scottish bookseller John Mein was the first one to open a circulating library in Boston in 1764 (Shera 1949). The first steps toward municipal control of the libraries were undertaken in Salisbury, Connecticut with the foundation of the Bingham Library in 1803. Similar town libraries – the third predecessor - were established mostly in New England, the oldest existing one being the one in the town of Peterborough, New Hampshire

which decided to set aside public funds for purchase of library books already in 1833 (Du Mont 1977). The fourth type were the school district libraries, the earliest one being found in New York in 1835. Other libraries were the college libraries extending their service to outside users, the oldest one being the Harvard one, established in 1638 and the privately endowed institutions, for example the Loganian Library in Philadelphia and the Astor and Lenox Libraries in New York City (Bostwick 1910; Rose 1954).

3.3.4. Italy

In Italy the reading cabinet (il gabinetto di lettura) started as a private circle supported by its own members and apart from offering a comfortable recreational space, it continuously stimulated the cultural and social life of the citizens on a defined territory. It was the result of an exclusively elitist and intellectual endeavor, becoming one of the vehicles of the idea of national unification. The Literary Society of Verona (La Società Letteraria di Verona), founded in 1808, is one of the oldest reading cabinets in Italy. It was established on the initiative of professionals with liberal-democratic culture. According to its statute, the goal of the association is to offer to its members means to educate themselves in the arts, letters and sciences. Since 1908 it has been a foundation offering cycles of conferences and publishing "Il Bollettino della Società Letteraria". The Scientific and Literary Cabinet (Il Gabinetto Scientifico e Letterario Vieusseux), founded in 1819 in Florence by Giovan Pietro Vieusseux, a Swiss merchant from Geneva, played a vital role in linking

Italian culture with that of other European countries in the 19th century, becoming one of the chief reference points for the Risorgimento movement as well (Prunas 1914; Desideri 2004; Bonsanti 2003). It began as a reading room with the leading European periodicals in a setting that encouraged conversation and exchange of ideas. Next to it a circulating library, opened to the general public regardless of their social status, was offering the latest publications in Italian, French and English. Already in 1837 its fund exceeded 12,000 volumes and today it boasts a patrimony of approximately 300,000 monographs and 1,800 periodicals. Vieusseux started editing the "Antologia" - a collection of articles translated from international newspapers. Around him there was always a milieu, interested in pedagogy, language, medicine, agronomy, geography, but above all in that liberalism which the Cabinet soon became an important stronghold of. The Cabinet was frequently visited by Manzoni, Stendhal, Schopenhauer, Thackeray, Dostoevsky, Mark Twain, Zola, and Kipling. In the meantime Vieusseux became the greatest theorist of the library circulation and organization in Italy, thus laying the foundations for the civil and the national identity of the Italian people. The institution was run privately by the Vieusseux family until 1919 when it became a foundation headed by the mayor of Florence. In the 20th century three new departments were set up by Alessandro Bonsanti, its director for almost 40 years: the Laboratory for Book Restoration, the Romanticism Center, and the Contemporary Archives. The cabinet also organized meetings, conferences, exhibitions, and in 1995 the quarterly review "Antologia Vieusseux" (nuova serie), found by Bonsanti in 1966 resumed

publication. The reading cabinet in Padua was founded in 1830 by 160 members. According to its statute, it is a society of civil persons, joined together to guarantee with maximum facility and minimum expenses knowledge about works contributing the most to the advance of letters and sciences. In 1873 the Cabinet merged with the Society of Encouragement of Agriculture and Industry (La Società di Incoraggiamento dell'Agricoltura e Industria). The Society, founded in 1844, resembled the ones in Germany, France and England which were created to promote agriculture. For the most part of the 1800's the two associations united the most influential persons of the city by thought and initiative. Nowadays, they enroll 70 members, most of them - university professors. Their cultural initiatives (conferences, seminars, debates, book presentations, guided visits, etc.), sometimes of general interest, sometimes - with specific goal, are organized without a preliminary planning, often on the initiative of a member, thus providing continuous and fruitful encounters. In 1846 about 80 citizens decided to establish a reading cabinet in Este, near Venetia (Selmin 1997). The founders were the lawyer Nuvolato, the architect Riccoboni and the educator Gasparini. The cabinet was located in two rooms in the municipal building free of charge. Nuvolato supported the idea of creating not only of a library, but also of La Raccolta Estense - a collection of works on the local history and literature. He is to be credited for transforming the reading cabinet into a center of patriotic ideas and liberal and anticlerical attitudes at eve of the second war for independence. Although reading retained its traditionally important role, more attention was paid to games, dancing,

numerous the festivities and the carnival. The Cabinet preserved its aristocratic character - while closed to students and the "plebe", it was open to women, but only at the end of the century. In order to avoid dissolution, in 1939 the Cabinet was transformed into a foundation. In 1960 it was decided that the library should not be a privilege only for rich bourgeois and had to be opened to all local citizens. Imitating their Italian counterparts, similar Slovene institutions appeared in the second half of the nineteenth century (Majovski 1995). The first among them was the Slav Reading Room (Slavjanska narodna čitalnica), inaugurated in 1861, which was a meeting place for the Slav people who lived in the center of Trieste. Its founders built a library with the association's funds and donations in money and books. Later reading rooms were founded in many neighborhoods and surrounding villages. Those associations aimed to increase the cultural growth and to strengthen the national awareness among the Slovene-speaking population through the spread of reading. With no public financial subsidies available, the first Slovene libraries were a product of voluntary work and the efforts of their members. The Society for Readings and Scientific Conversations (La Società di Letture e Conversazioni Scientifiche), founded in 1866, is one of the oldest cultural societies in Genoa. It has been playing a primary role in the cultural life of the city for decades. Its founders were mostly university professionals, who embraced the positivist culture of the epoch, but also entrepreneurs, bankers, members of the aristocracy and journalists. From around 50 members in 1866, the society, becoming a foundation by decree in 1872, reached 680 members in 1890. Among its

presidents were Arthur Issel, young naturalist, geology professor, future explorer of the Red Sea and Enrico Morselli, psychiatrist, neuropathologist and philosopher. Since 1870 the society has been publishing "Effemeridi" and since 1900 - "La Rivista Ligure" with articles not only in the humanities and the sciences, but also in politics, economics, and sociology.

3.3.5. The Nordic Countries

The Scandinavian folk high school (people's college) movement originated from the ideas of the Danish Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783-1872). An imminent Lutheran pastor, poet, philosopher, educator and social critic, he thought that the studies had to start from the people's own life conditions and experiences (Borish 1991). The center of the educational work had to be the local culture and language, not the classic culture and Latin and Greek languages. Since at that time Denmark was at war with Germany, German has been the official language in many parts of historical Denmark, therefore his ideas were also nationalistic in character (Fain 1971). His teaching was reflected in two key concepts - *Folkelighed* (rootedness in the spirit of the people) and *Livsoplysning* (enlightenment for life). Theologically, Grundtvig preached for the organization of the church through independent congregations – the authority of "the living word" (the term Christ used at the Last Supper). In a secular context this meant that the "living word" was not a formal lecturing, but a live communication between the teacher and the taught. The appearance of the folk high schools responded to the need of educating dispersed rural and

backward at that time population. Grundtvig's intention was to abolish the gap between the elite and the common man. The first *folkehøjskole* in Denmark was founded in 1844 at Rødding by Christen Kold, a follower of Grundtvig, and later spread to the rest of the Scandinavian countries (Campbell 1928; Møller and Watson 1944; Simon 1960; Rørdam 1965). The first Norwegian *folkehøgskule* was opened in 1864 at Sagatun, near Hamar, by Ole Arvesen and Herman Anker, both Grundtvig's disciples. In 1868 the Swedes, inspired by August Sohlman, editor of "Aftonbladet"and Ola Andersson, farmer and deputy, established the first three *folkhögskolor* - in Hvilan, Önnestads, and Östergötland. The Finnish *kansanopisto* became reality only in 1889: the one for Finnish-speaking girls at Kangasala, founded by Sofia Hagman (Kantasalmi and Hake 1997) and other for Swedish-speaking Finns – at Borgå, founded by Johan Elias Strömborg. Folk High Schools have also been established in Iceland, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands as active agents in the struggle to affirm the cultural identity of the area. In Poland folk high schools are known as *Uuniwersytety Ludowe*. The first one, inspired by the Nordic tradition, was created in 1900, based on nationalistic ideology. Grundtvig's writings were translated in 1922. The term "folk high school" denotes residential college offering informal, mainly non-vocational adult education courses. For many of them teachers, like the students live on the premises. These schools are outside of the mainstream educational system. Courses are genuinely diverse - languages, music, art, handicrafts, mass media, vocational education. They differ from the German *Volkshochschulen*, which offer both formal and

informal adult education, often on a part-time basis. The Nordic folk high school in Germany is called *Heimvolkshochschule*, the first one founded at Dreissigacker, near Meiningen, in 1920. It is different from the high school in the United States, the latter offering formal education to adolescents and young adults. Despite the fact that Scandinavian folk high schools receive government grants, they are not bound by strict regulations of their educational program and of the recruitment of teachers and students. Public support is not only given to cover teachers' salaries, but also for the buildings, and stipends to the students. In Sweden support comes also from regional and local educational authorities. Independence of the school system and teaching civic education, apart from the vocational training, are two of their common general characteristics. There exist certain differences among the folk high schools in different Scandinavian countries. In Sweden, most of the folk high schools belong to popular movements – cooperative movement, temperance movement, labor movement (Fleisher 1968). Some of them are run by parties and organizations. Others belong to different Christian congregations. In Denmark folk high schools are instilling appreciation of Danish and local culture in young people, while in Sweden they are inspiring Scandinavism. Swedish folk high schools stress the importance of knowledge based on sound scientific knowledge (Forster 1944). Apart from lectures, they provide for individual study. In Denmark and Norway, the main source is the spoken word, while Swedish are more oriented towards printed books and self-education. In Denmark they are all residential,

while in Sweden designated schools are day folk high schools with no residential facilities.

3.4. Quintessence of the most important Bulgarian cultural institution – *chitalishte*[27]

Chitalishte (plural: chitalishta) literally means "a place to read" (CHETA means to read). Chitalishte is an original Bulgarian cultural and educational organization. This is not an accidental phenomenon. It is a product of the aspirations of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie (the craftsmen from the cities located near the Balkan mountains and the merchants) in the making of the nation. Teachers, as representatives of the burgeoning intellectual elite, played quite significant role too. An important influence is the appearance of the new Bulgarian schools, the first one being opened in 1835 in Gabrovo. The ideas of the French Revolution, as well as the antimonarchical national revolutions in other European countries were imported in Bulgaria. The Crimean War, although unsuccessful for Russia, fuelled the hopes for national liberation. The first Bulgarian chitalishta were founded in 1858 in the cities of Svishtov, Lom, and Shumen. The first two were ports on the Danube river and were flourished as commercial and foreign investment centers. The third one hosted the Hungarian and the Polish patriots in exile who imminently influenced its cultural life by importing, for example, the theatre. Sava Dobroplodni, the

[27] This section is based on the fundamental works on chitalishte in Bulgaria (Chilingirov 1930, Chilingirov 1934, Kondarev, Sirakov and Cholov 1972, and Kondarev, Sirakov and Cholov 1979).

founder of the Shumen chitalishte, had visited similar institutions in Serbia and Austria. These cities boasted similar geographical, economic and social character, homogeneous population and merchants who studied abroad and maintained active contacts with Central European countries. Chitalishta sprang initially in economically well-to-do townships where modern society started to develop. Its emergence followed the classical pattern of dissemination of cultural movements from the center towards the periphery, from larger towards smaller settlements. The rapid process of spreading the institution of chitalishte gradually became a competition and a fashion. Replication and fashion prove to be the most powerful mechanisms for dissemination of innovations and creation of incentives for development, especially in the absence of a national State and institutions. Already consolidated and active, the chitalishta in the cities exercised influence, assisted and provided example to the ones in rural settlements. Chitalishte upholders became increasingly aware that the products of civilization and progress were unevenly distributed and manifested the new spirit of solidarity towards all members of the nation, regardless of their place of living. The pioneers in the countryside were founded in 1869 in eight villages: Svezhen (Adzhar), Biala Cherkva, Shipka, Muglizh, Smiadovo, Enina, Gradets and Gabarevo. In the patriarchal Bulgarian society, chitalishte was perceived as an institution for men, yet some women's associations in a lot of towns had identical goals and activities as their counterparts set up by men. The only difference consisted in the sex of their members, as well as in the focus - promotion of education and literacy among women, as well as charity.

Chitalishte in the sense of an exclusively voluntary organization with its own name, seal, statute, membership and elected governing body appeared later than the reading houses and the reading rooms. Examples of the latter ones were the public library in Kazunluk, opened in 1845, the *obshta staia* (common room) in Triavna, opened in 1847 and the reading room in the Lom School, opened in 1848. Yet, chitalishte, as an actively functioning organization, offered much more than a public place to read – it held lectures, published books and textbooks, financed the education of talented students and supplied the children of the poor with textbooks. It even opened schools, searched and hired teachers, often acting as a school board. The criteria for recognizing chitalishte as such are six: name (frequently with special connotation: Star, Sun, Hope, Progress, Revival, Knowledge, Spark), seal (very often a book with a torch, spreading the light of knowledge), existing statute (defining their goals and the means to achieve them), governing body (Board with chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer), members (having equal rights and obligations, paying membership duties proportional to their income), and continuous and variable activity.

Members belonged to two or three categories: 1. founders; 2. regular members; 3. donors. Some chitalishta provided for a fourth type - honorable members – persons with exceptional contribution to the national literature and education. The actual monetary contribution to meet the requirements of a founder was extremely high. Nevertheless, founding members were not

privileged over the other ones, except for their right to invite non-members to the general meetings. Regular members could become founding ones at any time as long as they fulfill the requirements. Apart from financial support acceptable donations took the form of books and real estate. Chitalishte was called people's – open to everyone. All members had the right to elect and be elected, to express opinions and to exercise control over the chitalishte activities. Some of the underlying principles were the majority rule, secret vote, equality. The Board was composed of 5-8 people of which all rendered service without remuneration. The code of rules was an indispensable part of the chitalishte statute. Generally, it was comprised of four sections: 1. operating code – opening hours, silence, no smoking, no alcohol, no gambling; 2. rules on the usage of books; 3. meeting procedures; 4. sanctions. A special paragraph in the statute provided for at least 2 rooms – one for reading and another one – for lectures and discussions.

Apart from the goals explicitly promulgated in its statute, chitalishta before the Liberation had another, a secret one – to support the national liberation. It was not rare when the board and the regular members participated in the organized liberation movement. Chitalishta were frequently initiators of writing petitions and organizing protest demonstrations in the struggle for independent national church.

One of the persistent problems haunting the chitalishte was the lack of its own premises. Most often the chitalishte was given space in the school

building, since teachers were its organizers. In other cases it was located in the church. In third instances, premises were rented. Fourthly, municipalities helped by offering buildings or financing the lease of immovables. Finally, a fifth solution was the construction of its own building. Another constant problem was finding sources of financing. Apart from the permanent flow from membership dues, chitalishte relied on charity, both individual and collective (mainly the guilds of tradesmen and craftsmen – shoemakers, slipper makers, tobacco producers, goldsmiths, weapon makers, and saddle makers). Other sources included revenues from lotteries, theater plays, and book sales. One-third of chitalishte's revenue came from theater plays; municipalities' contribution was seven percent, around five percent originated from cooperatives, four percent - from membership fees, while the state donated the least – one to two percent. Half of the revenue was linked to other sources, most likely private donations.

With time the press started playing a decisive role for popularizing chitalishte. Along with announcements about the foundation of a new chitalishte, it published appeals, so its example to be followed by other neighboring settlements. Other forms of popularizing chitalishte's activities were the publishing of speeches and opinions on such issues, as well as the publishing of its model statute.

Uniting chitalishta throughout the country was an idea which appeared for the first time in 1871, but only for the region of Veliko Turnovo. Before the

national liberation, it was thought that Istanbul chitalishte could play the role of a central one. However, it was not until 1910, during the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Sliven chitalishte, when the appeal for nationwide unification was born. The meeting took place in the capital in 1911 with the participation of delegates from 153 chitalishta, thus laying the foundations of the Union of the Chitalishta in Bulgaria (UCB). The publication of a monthly magazine "Chitalishte" started. In 1923 it was replaced for the next three years by newspaper "Chitalishtni vesti", published 3 times per week. The representatives even prepared a draft law on national chitalishte, but because of the ensuing wars, the law was not adopted until 1927. The law stipulated that each village with population of up to 10,000 had to open at least one chitalishte, while in larger settlements each neighborhood had to open a branch of the central one. Chitalishta were freed from taxes, municipalities were obliged to secure them with a building, and their property was declared free from seizure for debt repayments. In 1925, following the decision of the 8th congress of the UCB, regional chitalishte unions were created. In 1927, after a national conference, the district chitalishte unions were established as well. In 1932 UCB was renamed to Supreme Chitalishte Union in Bulgaria (SCU) and its statute was adopted. The latter stipulated that the institution of chitalishte maintain neutrality towards religion and politics. A new law on chitalishte, adopted in 1941, conferred the institution the status of a legal entity. In addition to traditional activities, the law enumerated new ones, for instance sending mobile libraries for villages without chitalishta, preservation of national monuments,

organizing games and sports competitions, participation in rescue operations during natural disasters and assistance to medical authorities.

Chitalishta cooperated and had joint activities with the state, municipalities, manufacturers' and consumers' cooperatives, youth and women's organizations, trade unions, guilds, charitable organizations, sport and tourist organizations, Red Cross organizations, organizations of vegetarians, hunters clubs, parent-teacher associations, the temperance movement, the Esperanto movement, the Union of Bulgarian writers, the Union of people's choirs.

Chitalishte combined successfully four main functions – that of a library, an educational institution, a theatre, and a museum.

It would be a grave error to identify chitalishte with a public library. Naturally, the library is a major part of chitalishte's cultural activity. But chitalishte is something more – it is a popular social and cultural organization. Nevertheless, precursors of the chitalishte libraries were the monastery and the school libraries. The latter continued to exist simultaneously and separately after the creation of the chitalishte library. All of them were guided by the principle of universal accessibility. The chitalishte library in Bucharest was planned to become later *narodna knigokhranitelnitsa* (national library). The library funds possessed not only books, but also newspapers and journals. Frequently the collections were small (the richest collection was in Stara

Zagora chitalishte – 15,000 volumes) and not very diverse. This is explained by the fact that until 1905 no more than 1,000 book titles, with less than 2,500 copies, were published annually, while periodicals never reached 2,000 copies each. Village chitalishte possessed rarely more than 500 volumes. Textbooks, scientific, and religious books predominated. The original Bulgarian fiction – novels, stories, poems – was extremely rare. Foreign language literature was mostly in Russian and French. The library classification almost did not exist until 1903 when the Pleven chitalishte adopted the Universal Decimal Library Classification and later the Supreme Chitalishte Union organized courses for librarians. Since very few Bulgarians could read and understand the articles, every Sunday the teachers organized collective readings followed by explanations and discussions. This is why few readers borrowed books for home, with the exception of teachers, senior students and some artisans. Regarding book usage, there were two types – exclusive, only for members, which were predominant, and universal, intended for everybody without restrictions.

The schools and the chitalishte were like two sisters often under the same roof, organized by the same person – the teacher. Schools were the prerequisites for the appearance of the chitalishta, while the chitalishta, organized as a complementary school, aimed at assisting materially and morally schools and continuing the insufficiently little education already received. Although the chitalishta were considerably less in number than the

schools, they supplied village schools with textbooks and contributed financially to teachers' salaries and to scholarships for students coming from low-income families. They also sponsored students abroad, mainly in trade and agricultural schools. Chitalishte also contributed to the opening of girls' schools - something very rare at that time - and to the hiring of instructors for them. The expenses of many school buildings and their furniture were paid by the chitalishta. Activists were motivated neither by religious scruples, nor by family relations when involved in charity. Their actions were justified by the radically new ideas of the inherent human rights, as well as by the obligations of the good citizen, responsible for society's welfare. Chitalishta also organized the annual school exams and the meetings of teachers where common programs on methods and forms of education were elaborated. Chitalishte is the birthplace of the idea about evening and Sunday schools for the illiterate who worked full-time or could not afford to study. Some of the chitalishte movement activists were debating the idea of founding the first university. The chitalishte in Braila, Romania established *Bulgarsko knizhovno druzhestvo* (Bulgarian Literary Society), which became later the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Several chitalishte published books and newspapers, but the financing and the distribution had to be guaranteed in advance. Some examples of their economic activities were the registration of a steamship society, a commercial society, a bank, and a credit institution.

The lack of popular literature, as well as the high percentage of illiterate or semi-illiterate population preconditioned the organization of public lectures and discussions every Sunday when often a vivid dialogue sparkled between lecturers and the audience. The living word was largely preferred, because the lecturer could immediately respond to questions from the audience and, later, stimulate a subsequent discussion. This activity contributed to the widening the social, political, and scientific interests of Bulgarians and naturally involving them in civil participation and debate on important theoretical and practical problems of life. Five major topics usually dominated the lectures delivered in an everyday comprehensible language. The most important were the Bulgarian history and past, the national religion question, French history, and contemporary European affairs. The second theme was the struggle against foreign influences coming from the Phanariots, the Protestants, and the Uniats. A third one touched the questions regarding the child education, the relations between spouses, the family, the structure of the society, the significance of arts and letters. The fourth type of topics was related to the natural sciences and medicine and in this case the lecturers were predominantly teachers and doctors. Such lectures were accompanied by demonstrations and public experiments. The fifth theme was associated with political economy and the practical agricultural and industrial needs of the population. After the Liberation in 1878 the priority of the fields changed: 1. economics, politics, sociology, law; 2. practical counseling; 3. history; 4. culture, literature, art; 5. medicine; 6. pedagogy, ethics; 7. natural and applied sciences. During the pre-

WWII period the average chitalishte offered 5 lectures per year and the average number of listeners per lecture was 80. Lectures, known as "popular universities" in the cities and as "people's lectures" in the villages, were in general free of charge, except for cases when they were offered by distinguished lecturers. Most chitalishte required the lecture to be written and sent in advance for approval.

Theatrical shows appeared simultaneously with the establishment of chitalishta. The first plays were translations and adaptations of West European and Russian classic masterpieces. Later, original Bulgarian dramas and comedies appeared as well. Female roles were initially performed by men, but very soon actresses found their own place on the stage. Some chitalishte theater companies later became professional. Apart from amateur dance and theatrical groups, chitalishta hosted choral societies, orchestras, and choirs. Within the same organizational structure chitalishte activists founded musical societies, as well as musical schools and musical circles for the young in order to expand their musical education and interests beyond the regular school. In the beginning of the previous century 150 cinema halls and 1,300 radios were registered. In addition the organizers offered balls, parties with poem recitals and singing, fashion shows, outings, specialized exhibitions, lotteries.

Since its foundation chitalishte members initiated another activity – opening of museums and collecting artifacts related to the Bulgarian history and folklore – archaeological monuments and fossils, clothes, tools, china, old

parchments, manuscripts, coins. It was not rare when chitalishte would establish an archaeological society or open an art gallery in the same building. Motivated by patriotic enthusiasm, chitalishte activists appealed also for the collection of national folk songs, fairy tales, proverbs, dialects.

The formation of Bulgarian culture would have been impossible without chitalishte – one of the most significant national cultural capital. The key to understanding its authority and endurance is its involvement in the two closely related streams of the National Revival - national consolidation and modernization. Within the underdeveloped and amorphous Bulgarian society at that time, chitalishte created the relations, which usually precede the birth of a nation. Chitalishte, which had all the characteristics of a voluntary civil association, reflected a qualitatively new agreement within Bulgarian communities by balancing between the personal and the public interest and by offering equal participation and universal access to services.

3.5. Testimony from Bulgarian sources about transfers of ideas from neighboring nations and from the West

The ideas of creating the unique Bulgarian institution chitalishte came from abroad. The reasons are obvious – Bulgarians had no independent state, they possessed relatively fewer material and financial resources compared to other nations and European Enlightenment took place later than in other parts of the continent. Nevertheless, Bulgarians were eager to catch up culturally and

politically with other nations; therefore they readily studied similar experiences in other countries, and by imitating, attempted to apply them under the specific conditions, first within the Ottoman Empire and later, within the boundaries of their independent state.

Institutions created to disseminate the latest human achievements in arts and sciences appeared first in Western nations. These were social gatherings which facilitated the exchange of ideas and critical discussions. Such ideas were readily transferred to nations that were not yet independent and that were in a process of constituting their own social institutions and states. The more advanced nations were retransmitting the ideas to their neighbors and allies. Hence the ideas about establishing the Bulgarian chitalishte as an organization of civil society came from two major types of sources: firstly, from neighboring states which have already achieved their national independence, like Greece and Serbia, and secondly, from the advanced Western nations, like France and Britain.

The major role for the appearance of Bulgarian chitalishte played similar institutions in neighboring Greece and Serbia, two countries which had already achieved their independence from the Ottoman empire. The Greeks had already founded their syllogos, while the Serbs – *chitalishte* or *chitaonitsa* (Chilingirov 1930, 39). Serbs and Greeks imitated the goals and the means of similar institutions of the European Enlightenment, because they were closer to Europe. Because of the geographical proximity and the resemblance of their

socio-economic structure, Bulgaria was the borrower or the importer; Greece and Serbia were the lenders or exporters of ideas. These countries shared common Slavic cultural heritage and Orthodox Christianity, common past as parts of the Ottoman Empire, as well as common awakening of nationalism. Various articles and authors document this flow of ideas.

The famous Bulgarian writer and editor of newspaper *Macedonia* Pencho Slaveĭkov translates an article published in the Greek newspapers Omonia and Neologus about the Central Philological Syllogos in Istanbul. The latter offers public lectures and discussions. It also publishes a newspaper, low-cost books, organizes poetic competitions, theatrical performances, maintains relations with similar organizations. Such institutions educate people in France to love freedom and the republic. It appeared first in Belgium around 1852 and later, in Britain. Slaveĭkov's goal is to show his compatriots how to imitate an educational and patriotic institution (Slaveĭkov 1870). Other Bulgarians were informed about the activities of the syllogos as well. An unknown member of the Bulgarian chitalishte in Istanbul writes few months after the previous editorial in 1870 that Bulgarian chitalishte had many achievements, but was not popularized like the syllogos. The author states that Bulgarians had 40 chitalishte, while Greeks - only 10. Bulgarians would organize public lectures, donate books, finance opening of schools and pay teachers' salaries. He concludes that all these achievements should be made known to everybody (Lazarov 1992, 7). Georgi Rakovski, a prominent

Bulgarian revolutionary and publicist, who studied in a Greek school near Istanbul between 1837 and 1841, was familiar with the Greek syllogos (Kazanski 2003, 20). In his correspondence, he provides the example of "Greeks abroad who have their own churches, c h i t a l i s h t a", and schools and urges Bulgarians to catch up with "other nations in the civilized world". (Rakovski 2007, 246). Rakovski recalls of a Greek chitalishte in the city of Timişoara whose members are only Bulgarians (Kazanski 2003, 45-46).

Some of the founders of Svishtov chitalishte studied in Belgrade and were familiar with the activities of the Serbian chitalishte there (Kazanski 2003, 47). This author does not exclude the personal influence of the Serbian merchants, living in Svishtov. Sirakov claims that even Rakovski was familiar with Serbian chitalishte, because he lived in Novi Sad for a certain period of time (Sirakov 2007, 64). In his letters to Vasil Dobrev and Maksim Raĭkovich, Rakovski appeals for the establishment of at least one "druzhestvo slovestnosti" with educational goals. Quite popular in Serbia, "Druzhestvo na srŭbskata slovesnost" was the forerunner of the Serbian Academy of Sciences (Kondarev, Sirakov, Cholov 1972, 25). Shishmanov asserts that the idea about the first chitalishte came from the similar institutions in the city of Banat and the Austrian Serbs who, in their turn, copied the German *Lesehallen* and *Lesevereine*. Nevertheless, he admits that chitalishte had such a great importance for the advancement of Bulgarian culture which they never had for Serbia (Shishmanov 1927, 322). Sava Dobroplodni, the founder of the

chitalishte in Shumen, writes in his memoires that he was familiar and he visited the chitalishte in Belgarde. Using it as an example, a Bulgarian *casino* (The word was first used to designate a country house and later started to be used for a social gathering place, where one could dance, listen to music, and gamble) was established. Dobroplodni recalls that they had a dozen of newspapers and periodical journals in Bulgarian, Russian, Czech, Polish, Dalmatian, Serbian, French, and German (Kondarev, Sirakov, Cholov 1972, 35).

The idea of Bulgarian chitalishte was re-exported quite successfully and served as a model for other people, such as Macedonians and Turks who were late adopters. Within these waves of diffusion, Bulgarians were emitters or transmitters. The contacts for information exchange within the burgeoning bourgeoisie served as relational channels of communication. One of its goals – the surge of modernization – contributed to the societal homogenizations and convergence. Chitalishta were established by the Bulgarian immigration not only in the neighboring countries, like Greece (Thessaloniki), Serbia (Belgrade, Niš), Macedonia (Skopje, Bitolia, Prilep, Ohrid), Turkey (Istanbul, Odrin), Romania (Bucharest, Constanța, Craiova), but also in Moldova (Chişinau), Russia (Moscow), Austria (Vienna), and Czech Republic (Prague) (Kondarev, Sirakov, Cholov 1972, 318-9). Georgievski recognizes that Macedonian chitalishte was quite similar to its Bulgarian counterpart (Georgievski 1975, 92). Although he assumes that the first

Macedonian chitalishte in Skopje resembled the one in Belgrade, Serbia, he recalls seeing there a Bulgarian newspaper and that one task of the Macedonian chitalishte was to send several youngsters to study in Bulgaria (Georgievski 1975, 95-6). All this confirms that Bulgarian chitalishte played an important role for the founding of the one in Macedonia. Stamatovich affirms that chitalishta in Bulgaria and Macedonia appeared later than in Serbia, but were also influenced by similar ideas and institutions coming from more developed European countries, such as France, Britain, Germany, Italy, Austro-Hungary (Stamatovich 1984, 79). Turks, worried by the fact that other nationalities in the empire became literate and more educated, founded their first chitalishte in Istanbul. It was called *Educational Society Dar-Yul-Finun*, later to become Academy of sciences (Chilingirov 1930, 51). In 1869 its chairman Ali Suavi efendi invited Turkish, Bulgarian, Armenian and Greek prominent citizens to participate in a project involving pronouncing of lectures and establishing *teatro-sultani* (Kondarev, Sirakov, Cholov 1972, 151).

Chitalishte emerged as one of the first attempts of Bulgarians to expand their social contacts outside their families and guilds to the community where they lived. One reason for this change was the appearance of more advanced economic organization. Hence, it is not accidental that the first three chitalishte appeared in three prosperous cities that were manufacturing and trade centers (Chilingirov 1930). The city of Shumen had the third largest garrison in the Ottoman Empire (after Edirne and Istanbul), which needed manufacturers to

answer its daily needs. The city of Svishtov was the Empire's main port on the river Danube. The city of Lom was the trade center with Europe and the link between Sofia and the rest of the continent.

However, external impetuses and examples were crucial for the chitalishte to appear as new forms of social interaction. In 1848 the united armies of Austria and Russia crushed the Hungarians fighting for independence and led by the Hungarian patriot Lajos Kossuth. The latter, along with the Poles from the armies of generals Józef Bem and Henryk Dembiński, 200 altogether, were forced to seek refuge in the Ottoman Empire by crossing the Danube. Moved from Lom to Shumen in October 1849, they spent one year there changing the patriarchic lifestyle of the local communities. Since the first days they opened a sort of a reading room where they read newspapers and discussed recent political developments (Chilingirov 1930, 37).

The first chitalishta resembled the ones in countries-exemplars, like Sweden, England, Germany, USA, Greece, Italy, but differed according to their origin and organization. They were not merely libraries or reading rooms, but "national civic clubs" of Bulgarian culture" (Vasilev 1939, 2-3). The author confirms that Polish and Hungarian immigrants influenced the foundation of one of the first chitalishte in Shumen, where Johann Ludwick Tieck's play *Leben und Tod der Heiligen Genoveva* (Life and Death of Holy Genoveva), written in 1800, was performed as *Mnogostradalnata Genoveva* (Suffering Genoveva), translated from Serbian in 1856. Gaetano Donizetti's opera

Belisario was performed in Lom as a musical in 1856. *Bellisar,* written in 1772 by Hans Carl Heinrich von Trautzschen with a plot taken from *Bélisaire*, a novel by Jean-François Marmontel written in 1767, was translated as *Velizari*.

The ideas of the Enlightenment came from merchants and young Bulgarians who studied abroad. One of the founders of the first Bulgarian chitalishte in Shumen, Sava Dobroplodni, graduated in Karlovac, Croatia (Sirakov 1965, 26). The latter recalls in his memoirs that English and French troops, located in the city after the Crimean War, inspired the putting on stage the comedy "Mihal" in 1856 (Sirakov 2007, 246). Dobroplodni's *Mihal Mishkoed ili Zeh ta, Radke! Zeh ta!* (Mikhal, the Mouse-Eater) was in fact compiled from the contemporary Greek farcical comedy *O, Leprentis*, produced in 1835 by Mikhail Hourmouzis. Hungarian actor Gábor Egresi, a friend of Sándor Petőfi, who immigrated to the Ottoman empire, organized the first theatrical plays, performed by his compatriots in the city (Sirakov 2007, 28).

Kondarev, Sirakov, and Cholov document that theatrical plays were translated or abridged forms of classic masterpieces (Kondarev, Sirakov, Cholov 1972). The extremely popular play *Adelaida, alpiiska pastirka* (Adelaida, a Shepherdess of the Alps) which appeared in 1857, was a shortened version of *La Bergère des Alpes*, written in 1766 by Jean-François Marmontel. Jean-Baptiste Poquelin - Molière's works were frequently translated. What Molière wrote in 1666 as *Le médecin malgré lui* (The Doctor in spite of Himself), was adapted in 1862 by Dobri Voinikov in Shumen as *Po nevolia*

doctor. *L'avare ou l'école du mensonge* (The Miser or the School for Lies) from 1668 appeared as *Skŭpernikŭt* (The Miser) in 1875. His last comedy *Le Malade imaginaire* (The Imaginary Invalid) from 1673 was translated as well. *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare was put on stage for the first time in the city of Svishtov in 1868. Ivan D. Shishmanov introduced parts of Shakespeare's comedies in his *Pencho Kŭrlezha* (Pencho, the Tick). *Die Räuber* (The Robbers) written in 1781 by Friedrich Schiller was shown as *Razboinitsi* in 1870. Dobri Voinikov's drama *Raina kniaginia* was in fact the 1866 adaptation of a work by Alexander Fomich Veltman. Denis Ivanovich Fonvizin's *Nedorosl'* (The Minor) from 1782 was adapted as a comedy by Todor Nikolov Shishkov as *Ne shte mozhe! ili glezen Mircho* (It won't! or Spoiled Mircho) in 1873. *La Mérope française*, written in 1743 by François Marie Arouet (Voltaire) was translated from Greek as *Meropa*. In 1772 Gotthold Ephraim Lessing wrote *Emilia Galotti*, which was translated in 1873. *Hernani, ou l'honneur castillan* (Hernani or the Castilian Honor) written in 1830 by Victor Hugo was presented as *Ernani*. The opera *Lucrezia Borgia* by Gaetano Donizetti premiered in 1833, but in Bulgaria was initially presented as a musical.

Unsatisfied with their living conditions, Bulgarians were forced to look for educational institutions and ideas. Since they did not find answers in their proper history, they searched for them in other nations. Starting up public lectures and popular education illustrates how foreign experience in this field

was initially emulated and later – served as inspiration for the creation of a unique Bulgarian answer.

England, France, and Prussia are mentioned as examples of the first countries setting the trend of founding clubs that distributed knowledge among their citizens (Shishmanov 1927, 325). The author further informs about the two different theatres in London: the Globe – for the nobles and the Blackfriars – for the general public, Grand Opéra and Odéon theatre in Paris, Teatro di San Carlo in Naples, Teatro alla Scala in Milano, as well as those in Denmark, Sweden, Poland, Russia, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Shishmanov 1927, 328).

Quoting Tabakov (Tabakov 1910), Chilingirov (Chilingirov 1930, 40) demonstrates that Western European educational institutions, as precursors of Bulgarian chitalishte, go back to the 16th century – one century after the invention of the printing. He mentions the French *salle de lecture* and the German *Lesehallen* and *Lesevereine*. While Rakovski was exiled in Marseille, France for year and a half, he was to be found frequently in the *salle de lecture* (Traĭkov 2007, 113). The influence of the latter is witnessed by the fact that the seal of the Bulgarian chitalishte, established by him in Bucharest, bears an engraving "Cabinet de lecture bulgare à Bucharest" (Kazanski 2003, 24).

Shishmanov (Shishmanov 1912) presents and discusses the planned use of nationwide system of public lectures. At the end of 19th century Sweden

developed a well-organized system of public lecturing which covered mostly rural areas and was heavily subsidized by the state budget. The idea of continuous adult education was reported at the first congress of the newly-inaugurated Union of chitalishe in Bulgaria in 1911 by its first chairman, professor Shishmanov. Educated abroad – in Bürgerschüle, Vienna, Geneva and having obtained a doctorate in psychology from Jena University in 1884 (Shishmanov 1945, 10), he constantly maintained relations with foreign academia. His report and recommendations for creating a similar organization in Bulgaria were published in the magazine *Chitalishte*. Alfred Jensen, a well-known Slavist from the Nobel Institute of the Swedish Academy of sciences, sent him detailed information about their 505 *Föreläsningsanstalter* (Institutes for popular lectures) or *Föreläsningsföreningar* (Societies for popular lectures) together with the catalogue of the 2,115 popular lectures offered in 1912-13 by the Stockholm *Folkbildningsförbundet* (Association for popular education). The Association maintained relations with 244 lecturers (more than 40 of them were women) with various professions – university professors, teachers, librarians, editors, journalists, museum directors, priests, bookshop owners, mayors, physicians, pharmacists, lawyers, judges, agronomists, architects, engineers, bank executives, postal employees, officers, workers, factory owners, etc. During 1909 they offered 2,829 lectures in the following fields: geography, history, sociology, hygiene, literature, philosophy, ethics, astronomy, education, biology, religion, mathematics, physics, chemistry, theology, arts, agriculture, geology, immigration, philanthropy, cultural history, technical sciences,

military science, home economy, linguistics, psychology, architecture, sports. Apart from the Stockholm Association, there existed 5 similar ones, called *Centralbyrån* (Central offices): in Lund - *Centralbyrån i Lund för populära vetenskapliga föreläsningar*, 1898, in Göteborg - *Västra Sveriges folkbildningsförbunde i Göteborg*, 1903, as well as in Norrköping, Skövde, and Karlstad which offered not less than 5,000 lectures to their 468 local societies in 1909. The Swedish state generously funded these lectures, gradually increasing the allotment. For example, in 1886 it spent 15,000 kronor, while in 1911 – 235,000 kronor, and for the period 1886-1912 - more than 2 million kronor in total. The author considers the possibility to apply Swedish experience in Bulgaria. He rightfully notes that lectures were delivered before the Bulgarian national liberation in 1878 and there is no doubt about their usefulness. By analogy with Sweden, he envisages the Union of chitalishte in Bulgaria to maintain a group of lecturers who can be sent even to the most remote chitalishte after paying them the travel, daily expenses and a honorary. The Union would send to chitalishte a program with the lectures that can be offered throughout the year. Regarding the question about financing, the author realistically points out that lecturer cannot become a profession, as it is in the United States of America, since their salaries will not be enough to support them. Nevertheless, he suggests that the meager state financing (in 1905 Bulgaria spent 18,000 leva, while Sweden contributed with 125,000 kronor!), could be complemented by local funding. 12 years later it was confirmed (Shishmanov 1924, 13) that applying the Swedish system could bear fruits

under Bulgarian conditions. Yet in Bulgaria public lecturing was decentralized and adapted to local conditions, because chitalishte had regional organizations grouped in the administrative divisions. Also cinemas were opened within the chitalishte buildings.

The existence of educational institutions in Western Europe since the 16th century was well-known to Bulgarians. Tabakov (Tabakov 1910, 216) informs about the existence of popular libraries in Hamburg in 1529, and in Manchester and Boston in 1852. At the end of the 19th century libraries in Vienna, Dresden, Hanover, Bremen were founded at the initiative of educational societies like *Gesellschaft für Verbreitung der Volksbildung* (Society for Dissemination of People's Education) and *Deutscher Verein zur Verbreitung gemeinnützige Kenntnisse* (German Association for Dissemination of General Knowledge). Later people's universities spread out in France - *Ligue de l'enseignement* (The Teaching League), in England - the University extension, and in Germany (Tabakov 1910, 217). Similar information is provided by other authors (Chilingirov 1930, 40).

Bulgarian chitalishte was influenced by the Enlightenment ideas about popular education and the Nordic movement of folk high schools. Bulgarian activists appealed for the establishment of popular/people's universities, providing the example of Denmark where more than 70 such institutions existed before the WWI. Shishmanov points to the relationship between them and "rural democracy" in a small state (Shishmanov 1924, 12). According to

him, Germany provides an example of how groups of workers or peasants, eager to learn, can be expanded due to the voluntary participation of students, teachers, professors and scholars and the sponsorship of trade unions, municipalities, and ultimately, the state (Shishmanov 1924, 13). Students in such universities actively participate in its management as representatives of its governing body and by choosing lectures and lecturers. Another article informs in detail about foreign experiences in adult education throughout the world (Gerdzhikov 1914). Members of all these societies are not only librarians, but citizens of various professions. The *Society for dissemination of useful knowledge* in Sweden starts opening public libraries in cities and in villages as early as 1833 (Gerdzhikov 1914, 76). In 50 years libraries appeared not only in cities, but also in villages due to the contribution of leaders like Silestrom and Rudenshold. In 1869 the *German Society for dissemination of useful knowledge for all* was established in Prague, Austria. In 1886 the *South Austrian Society for Popular Education* was founded in Krems, Austria. The *Wiener Volksbildungsverein* (Vienna Society for Popular Education), established in 1887, contributed to the foundation of 13 libraries throughout the city. It also organized free public lectures all year round, courses and concerts. In 1887-8 they were attended by 600 people, while in 1894-5, five years later their number increased to 78,000 (Gerdzhikov 1914). The *Gesellschaft für Verbreitung von Volksbildung* (Association for Dissemination of People's Knowledge) founded 2,055 libraries between 1892 and 1902 in Germany. Its initiative was enhanced by the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für etische Kültur*

(German Society for Ethic Culture) (Gerdzhikov 1914, 81). In France *Ligue de l'enseignement* (Teaching League), founded in 1861 and *Sociéte Franklin* (Franklin Society), founded in 1862, contributed to the spreadout of libraries, the latter especially well-known for popularizing the so-called moving libraries among soldiers. Ukrainians in Galicia, mostly agricultural producers, succeeded in organizing 2,611 reading houses where in 1912 only they had 2,000 lectures, 1,500 meetings, 300 theatrical companies, and 200 choirs (Gerdzhikov 1914, 81). At the same time Bulgaria, with a smaller population, boasted only 500-600 chitalishte. The author assumes that Ukrainians are organized like the Russians in *komiteti gramotnosti* (Literacy Committee) and funded by zemstva (form of local government in Russia). The most important ones of these in Russia were in Petrograd, Moscow, and Kharkov. Apart from providing free access to libraries, they organized discussions, lectures, meetings, excursions, exhibitions, courses, and museums (Gerdzhikov 1914, 85). Another author also draws on the example of planned and organized public lectures in Sweden, France, Germany in order to justify the central role of the Union of the chitalishte in Bulgaria to establish a list of lecturers, their domains, and the lectures offered. He appeals for a more selective choice of lecturers, as well as for a regular state funding (Strakhilov 1911). In a lecture (Shishmanov 1914) on April 11, 1914, in the village of Brestovitsa, Pazardjik, the chairman of the Union of chitalishe in Bulgaria underlines the successful example of popular adult education in Scandinavian and Nordic European countries, which resemble Bulgaria in terms of population and area. He mentions Sweden,

Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium (Shishmanov 1914, 29-30). Although these countries have considerable rural population, like Bulgaria, they are economically very developed. The author witnessed how during holidays peasants assemble in a club, where they attended public readings, lectures, recitals, music and art performances. What impressed him most was that there were no privileged seats - an expression of their equality. The next day he was surprised to find the same participants in the fields, or in the farm, or in the forest, working diligently. They were so proud with their life that they would not change it for a position of a town clerk, because they cherished their freedom and independence. Rural population from these countries is the most educated in Europe and one of the explanations for this is the advancement of their popular education. Denmark is a good example to follow. It has established 79 people's universities for a population of 2.3 million. Experimental stations and museums are attached to each university. A student could be anyone, regardless of age and sex. A typical program lasts four months between November and March for men and the three summer months for women, 12 hours daily with breaks. It comprises not only technical, but also general courses. Subjects include history, geography, physics, chemistry, geology, mathematics, literature, music, and gymnastics. The author concludes that Denmark's economic progress is entirely due to these institutions. He advises that the surest way to make social progress is to imitate the best examples; therefore Bulgaria has to go the same way as Denmark. He admits that Bulgaria does not have the Danish resources, but believes that chitalishte

can play the noble role of the Danish popular universities or at least partially substitute for the European popular high schools (Shishmanov 1914, 36). By that time the Union of chitalishte has prepared a list of 313 public lectures and more than 50 lecturers were ready to travel where they would be needed free of charge, since all expenses were covered by the Union. He summarizes that chitalishta are the greenhouses of science which are not only an exclusive privilege of the elite, but also an important necessity for the masses. Shishmanov emotionally quotes the current French minister of education, according to whom "a country that wants to be free, has to be educated" (Shishmanov 1914, 28), and at the same time he envies America, whose people take to court all institutions that hamper its access to knowledge (Shishmanov 1914, 32).

3.6. Conclusion

Thus for the creation of their chitalishte, as an institution of civil society, Bulgarians borrowed ideas from Western Europe, as well as from adjacent Balkan nations which served as intermediaries of Western European ideas. In turn, they influenced other Balkan neighbors for the creation of similar institutions. Yet, almost everywhere, chitalishte disappeared with time, while in Bulgaria it assumed a central place in the cultural and national self-identification. The explanations for such vitality of a civic organization are several. Firstly, it appeared as a nationalist organization which contributed to the nation-building. Its founders were deeply convinced that education is part of

the emancipation the newly-born nation and regarded chitalishte as a vehicle of survival or maybe even as a weapon in the struggle for change. Nationalist movements on the Balkans were a product of a social fermentation of a new social group, the bourgeoisie, which wanted to revendicate its economic achievements with political rewards. Secondly, ideas about chitalishte were not blindly copied and emulated. Foreign examples of similar institutions inspired the creation of an original social structure which combined variable activities, goals and diverse organizations. Why such an institution concentrated so many activities? The answer is rather trivial. Bulgaria was one of the poorest countries in Europe. It had no resources and therefore could not afford so many organizations in different fields. For that reason chitalishte combined many organizations. Some neighboring nations and more advances countries of Europe usually had independent organizations for each activity, for example musical societies, theatrical societies, choirs, philharmonics. They had also an intellectual elite which created their own almost closed circles of intellectual movements. In contrast Bulgarian chitalishte was aiming at the popular culture and education. In a way it was more practical and down to earth. Last, but not least, other state bureaucracies funded generously their education and adult education. The Bulgarian state bureaucracy, apart from being relatively poor compared to its counterparts, was undereducated, irresponsible, and complacent. For that reason, education and dissemination of popular knowledge became private and civic concern of philanthropists and volunteers. Chitalishte was a unique institution, because it was created under the conditions of foreign

political and religious domination. It was linked to the political and spiritual emancipation of the Bulgarian people.

Finally, the case study of the Bulgarian chitalishte has a dual implication. Firstly, by using testimonials from its activists, it has been demonstrated that Bulgarian chitalishte, right from its appearance, was an imported idea from various sources, thus combining the experience of several precursors. At a later stage it drifted away from its models, thus adapting to the local specific conditions and developing its own physiognomy and unrepeatable character.

Secondly, it confirms that rational choice theories related to the transfer of public policies of organizations and governments can be a useful heuristic tool to analyze the interchange of ideas and structures in the Third sector even from a historical perspective. Chitalishte enriches and develops further theories about borrowing of ideas and institutions. Adopters may become transmitters at their turn in a chain reaction. An importer may accept ideas from several exporters, as well as an exporter may transmit social knowledge to several importers. At certain point of time the agents of transfer may play the role of intermediaries or policy brokers only. Therefore, in reality, the same process of social learning may be much more complex. The same holds even for the types of lesson-drawing. In the *longue durée* the types may be combined – thus if the process started as simple copying, later it may switch to emulation and adaptation to the local social conditions, and finally end up with inspiration for

the creation of a completely new institutional structure. However, there is no doubt that the successful utilization of policy transfer theories in the world of institutions of social capital speaks of their enlarged explanation power, since their application becomes more universal.

CONCLUSION

The three articles bring along significant contributions to the advancement of knowledge. The first one, although not the pioneering the observation that European post-Communist countries possess weak civil societies, confirms it for the longest temporal period ever researched up till the time of this publication. It also challenges openly the hypothesis of cohabitation of democracy and social capital by rejecting its universal applicability, given the respective assumptions, found in the text. However, its major contribution is the conclusion that some mature democracies (in Southern Europe) exhibit substantial variations in civic organizations and their low measurements do not bode for predicaments in democratic life. In fact European post-Communist states resemble very close these Latin European established democratic regimes which means that they will follow their trajectories as well.

The second article is the first compilation and classification of the most important associations in modern Bulgaria, published in English and Bulgarian language. In addition, the organizational clusters are reviewed during a comparatively long time period which is also a contribution to the historiography of Bulgarian associational life until 1944. The research is the result of field work which combined personal interviews with historians of the organizations and respectively, archival research of original documents. As far as theory is concerned, this organizational panopticum serves as an empirical refutation of hypotheses attempting to infer that present organizational

weakness of post-Communism might be due to the lack of developed organizational life in the past.

The merits of the third article are twofold. On empirical level it is demonstrated that the most important cultural organization in Bulgaria emerged as an institution modeled after similar institutions in other European countries, a fact that has never been openly recognized by scholars before. The compilation of original Bulgarian sources is unique and it is again a product of meticulous work with documents and personal interviews with organizational historians. On theoretical level it confirms the applicability of the voluminous and unstructured body of literature on policy transfer to a historical case existing before the appearance of the theory itself. Last, but not least, the systemic overview of the major European precursors of Bulgarian *chitalishte* represents a modest tribute to the less known field of political sociology of history of reading.

Logically, the next question to be answered is the future possible avenues for research. There exist several possibilities for the three levels of analysis already presented in the three chapters.

On a global level the co-habitation between democracy and social capital may continue to be tested with new data coming from successive WVS waves. Here are some preliminary findings using data coming from the 5th WVS which was just published.

The interviews for the fifth WVS wave were conducted during a 5-year period - between 2004 and 2008. The interviews for 25 out of the 57 cases (44%) were conducted in 2006, the interviews for 15 out of the 57 cases (26%) were conducted in 2007, and the interviews for other 13 out of the 57 cases (23%) were conducted in 2005. This wave resembled the third one regarding the belonging to the types of voluntary associations - the interviewed were asked if they were active or inactive members in nine types of voluntary organizations. After eliminating two categories - labor and political organizations, the sum of all memberships was calculated, as well as the memberships per person for every country. There were no values for 3 cases (Guatemala, Hong Kong and Iraq), therefore decreasing the cases to 54. Then all cases are grouped into four categories, according to the type of political regime.

The group of 17 mature democracies includes Andorra**, Australia, Canada,** Cyprus**, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States**. As far as Cyprus, it is the Greek part of the island that is taken into consideration. Countries in bold in this and the next three categories have already participated in previous surveys. The eight post-Communist countries are the following: **Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Poland, Romania,** Serbia**, Slovenia, and Ukraine.** The category of the 19 post-authoritarian countries (or non-Communist, non-authoritarian ones during previous surveys), ranked by

Freedom House either as free or partly free, comprises **Argentina, Brazil,** Burkina Faso**, Chile, Colombia,** Ghana**, India,** Indonesia**,** Jordan**,** Malaysia**,** Mali**, Mexico, Peru, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan,** Trinidad and Tobago**, Turkey, Uruguay.** The 10 non-democratic countries, ranked by Freedom House either as not free or partly free, are: **China,** Egypt**,** Ethiopia**,** Iran**, Morocco, Russian Federation,** Rwanda**,** Thailand**, Viet Nam, and** Zambia**.**

The highest mean of the membership in organizations have the mature democracies (1.615), while the lowest – the post-Communist countries (0.557). Post-authoritarian countries are close to mature democracies (1.494), followed by non-democratic countries – 1.494. Again, most homogeneous are the post-Communist countries (SD=0.395), while most heterogeneous are the post-

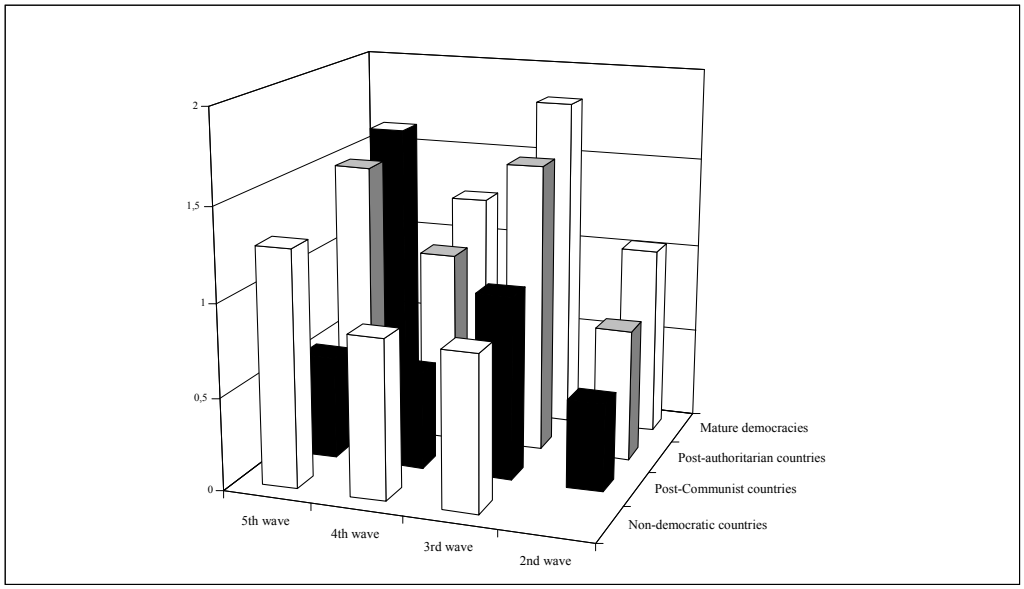

Figure 6. Mean organizational membership for the four groups of countries during all WVS waves

authoritarian ones (0.926), with non-democratic ones (0.865) trailing just behind them and the mature democracies situated somewhere in-between with SD=0.538. Figure 6 on page 171 indicates visually the standing of each category during all WVS waves.

The four categories from the fifth wave are broken into similar subcategories as the ones from the previous wave. The only difference is that the subcategory "USA and Canada" from the fourth wave is replaced by "English speaking mature democracies" (5 cases) and the post-Communist countries are divided now into members (4 cases) and non-members (4 cases) of the EU (Figure 7 on page 172). The Latin mature democracies (4 cases) and

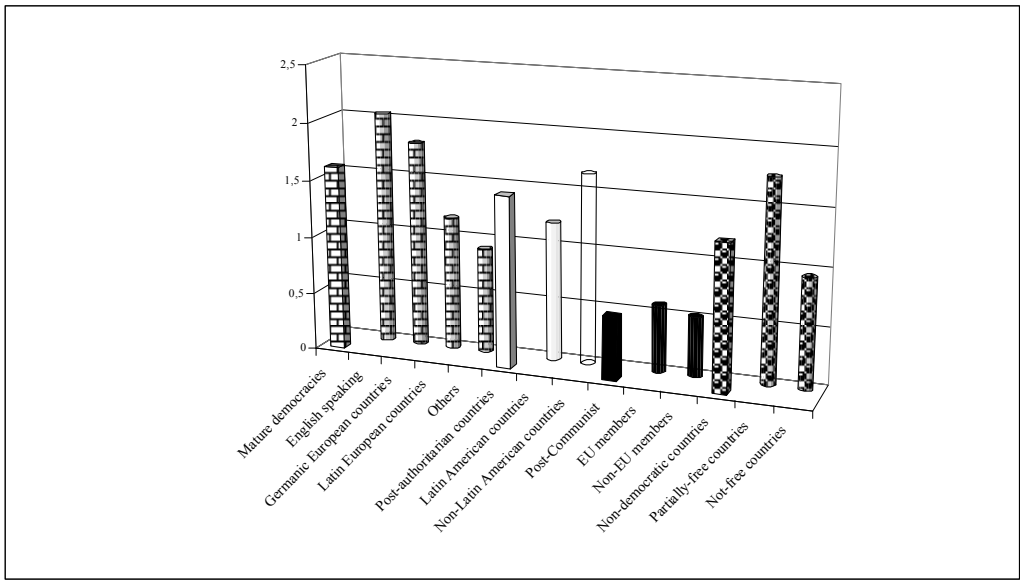

Figure 7. Average membership – breakdown of the four groups during the fifth WVS wave

the Latin post-authoritarian countries (12 cases) possess the lowest mean of organizational membership within the category, respectively 1.166 and 1.212, but the latter are the most homogenous, the former – the least homogenous, respectively with SD=0.390 and SD=0.460. The English speaking countries manifest the highest mean (2.031), followed by the Germanic ones (6 cases: 1.798). New members of the EU (0.591) are slightly more active than non-member ones (0.523) within the post-Communist group, while partly-free countries (4 cases: 1.760) dominate the non-free ones (6 cases: 0.959) in the non-democratic category, the latter also being the more homogenous (0.634, compared to 1.031).

During this wave for the first time the correlations between WVS values and FH ratings are only positive (Table VIII on page 174). In descending order they are: non-democratic countries, post-Communist countries, mature democracies and finally, post-authoritarian states. Except post-Communist counties, other groups have never had the same rankings. After the breakdown, within the post-authoritarian countries, the Latin American ones exhibit a considerably weaker correlation than the non-Latin ones. Within the group of the non-democratic countries, partly free countries display higher correlation than the non-free ones. The only new finding is that values of the group of post-Communist-countries EU members exceed the ones of non-members.

From the correlations between WVS values and IDEA turnout rates during the 5th wave (Table VIII on page 174) it is clear that non-democratic and

post-authoritarian countries maintain positive values, which something new for the latter. Mature democracies as before stay negative and post-Communist countries, surprisingly, are situated very close to them for the first time. Within the mature democracies subgroup, for the first time Latin and Germanic countries have negative correlations, while English speaking ones – positive. Non-free countries have higher values than partially free ones, but the latter are smaller. For the first time post-Communist non-EU members perform better than EU members, but all with negative values. Within the post-authoritarian group non-Latin countries are positive, while Latin ones are negative.

TABLE VIII. Correlation coefficients between WVS values and FH ratings and between WVS values and IDEA turnout rates during the 5th wave (before and after the breakdown).

COUNTRIES	WVS-FH	WVS-FH	WVS-IDEA	WVS-IDEA
All	**0.226**		**0.144**	
Mature democracies	**0.335**		**-0.245**	
Non-European		-		0.019
European		-		-0.355
English-speaking		-		0.251
Germanic European		-		-0.194
Latin European		-		-0.840
South European		-		-0.851
Post-authoritarian	**0.258**		**0.053**	
Non-Latin American		0.419		0.219
Latin American		0.135		-0.119
Post-Communist	**0.358**		**-0.283**	
Non-EU candidates		0.302		-0.080
EU candidates		0.869		-0.359
Non-democratic	**0.473**		**0.471**	
Partly-free		0.235		0.658
Not-free		0.059		0.702

The global analysis of the new data confirms conclusions made in previous tests. It again indicates that post-Communist countries possess the lowest levels of social capital and along with that they are the most homogenous group. At the same time they resemble Latin countries and particularly, Latin mature democracies. The most recent test testifies post-communist EU members are closer to mature democracies in general.

As far as Bulgarian associational life is concerned, one might dare to research its condition during the Communist period. Because of the state trespassing civil society's territory by closing, regrouping, and centralizing voluntary organizations, one might look into less formal and spontaneous initiatives. In addition, the co-operatives which were not included on purpose in the present study have always been the organization with the biggest membership in Bulgaria since the start of their movement at the end of 19th century. Of course, the major problem of locating adequate documentation remains and this will render the task very challenging.

Regarding the Bulgarian reading societies, the major West European precursors have been analyzed. Nevertheless, some secondary ones mentioned in Bulgarian sources could be researched in more detail. Among them one can look into the literary societies in Belgium and Netherlands, in some Slavic and Central European nations (Russia, Ukraine, Poland, and Hungary), as well as in Bulgarian neighbors on the Balkans (Greece, Serbia, Macedonia, and Turkey).

Starting with Belgium, it would be of interest to explore the history of the first *cabinet littéraire* in Verviers, founded in 1775, as well as the *sociétés littéraires* in Wallonia – Liège, Huy – and Flanders – Bruges, Hasselt, Gand (Biart 1981). By analogy with Germany reading societies were founded in Netherlands as well. Already in the 1770s *Leescirkel* united subscribers to periodicals. 68 out of 2100 subscription lists were reading societies in 1781. The *leeskabinet* appeared in Southern Netherlands in 1776. It was organized within bookshops of book traders. Gradually *leescollegie, leessocietëit* evolved to *leesgezelschap*. New forms were the *leesgenootschap* and the *leesmuseum.* In 1792 only in Amsterdam there have been 36 reading societies with 3,000 members. The discussed topics were increasingly less literary and more political. That is why by 1794 they all were banned by the state, except for a very small number that were strictly out of politics. The public *Lees-Bibliotheek* contributed to the decline of reading clubs as they were taking over their main functions. Because of the French invasion, life became more liberal. Thus the reading clubs eventually were converted into private clubs, the last of which was closed in 1974 (Buijnsters 1981).

Some of the Russian literary salons in the 18th and 19th century included Zinaida Volkonskaya's and Avdot'ia Elagina's salons in Moscow in the 1820s and Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna's salon each Thursday in Saint-Petersburg in the 1840s. It is worth to mention also Stankevitch circle's debates on literature and philosophy in Moscow since 1831. Since 1844 in Saint-

Petersburg Mikhail Petrashevskii, a follower of the French utopian socialist Charles Fourier, organized a literary discussion group of progressive-minded intellectuals - Petrashevski Circle. Ukrainians founded *galitsko-russka matitsa* in Lvov in 1848 (Manfred 1981). At the same time in 1835 Polish citizens of Posen, and later in Gostyń, founded an organization – *kasyno* – in order to promote the educational activities of their compatriots in Prussian Poland. In 1841 Karol Marcinkowski, a physician and social activist, established *Towarzystwo pomocy naukowej* (Association for promoting science) in Poznań. The society offered scholarships to talented, but poor young Poles, thus preserving Polish language and culture in the German occupied areas of Poland (Magner 2003). In Hungary a host of civic institutions (cultural and music societies, reading and social clubs) sprang up as a result of patriotic surge. Thus by the mid 19th century there were more than 500 associations, for example *Nemzeti Casino* (National Casino) founded in 1827, the Pest-buda Hangászegyesület (Pest-Buda Music Society) in 1836, the Pesti Műegylet (Pest Arts Society) in 1839, the *Nemzeti Kör* (National Circle) in 1844, the reading and literary club Pesti Kör (Pest Circle) in 1848 (Nemes 2001).

It will be very interesting to trace the Balkan precursors of the Bulgarian *chitalishte*. The Greeks were known for organizing educational societies, called *syllogos*, while the Serbs, since the opening of a reading society in Belgrade in 1827, established institutions with similar names: *čitaonica, čitionica, čitavnica, čitalna* (Stamatovich 1984). Valuable information would provide a

detailed research on the cases of Macedonia and Turkey which show how Bulgaria in turn became a model for neighboring Balkan countries. The first reading club in Skopje, Macedonia, was opened in 1874 (Stamatovich 1984). Between 1939 and 1954 the Turks started establishing *Köy Enstitüleri* (Village Institutes) as cornerstones of a rural development project started by the Kemalists (Stone 1974). These were 5-year co-educational, public schools. They were designed to combine work and education at the same time. Their graduates were expected to be both school teachers and community leaders (Vexliard and Aytaç 1964). The government had to close them due to strong pressure from the society and the opposition party (Yılmaz 1977). By that time there were twenty-one Village Institutes which produced about 25,000 graduates (Stirling 1965). The architect of the Village Institutes project, Ismail Hakkı Tonguç, a Turkish villager from Bulgaria, scrutinized especially the Bulgarian educational system (Karaömerlioğlu 1998).

Another research might be directed towards new findings in Bulgarian sources which refer to reading societies in nations and countries that have been omitted or overlooked, for instance, institutions in other Latin nations (Romania, Spain, and Portugal), or within the Slavic space. There is enough information that the latter boasted rich organizational life, for example, Slavic cultural and patriotic organizations, known as *matica*, were founded in 1862 by the Croatians (Lakuš 2008), in 1863 by the Slovaks (Malová 2003), as well as by the Czechs (Moravcová 1996; Šimůnková 1999). After the establishment of

reading societies in Zagreb and Zadar in 1807, Dalmatia was soon covered with *casino*, *gabinetto di lettura* or d*ruxba od sctenja* (Reading Room), *narodna čitaonica* (National Reading Room) in Split, Dubrovnik and other coastal cities. The citizens of Zara founded a public library *Biblioteca comunale Paravia* in 1856 and a circulating one - *Biblioteca Circolante Cattolica* in 1872 (Lakuš 2008). Similar reading societies were found in Slovenia in1838, in Montenegro in 1839, and in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1866 (Stamatovich 1984).

Because social capital may be latent and potential, it might assume different forms and it might not be associated with politics at all times. Its eventual "metamorphoses" render the concept complex and versatile which will provide researchers with sufficient material for work in the future.

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